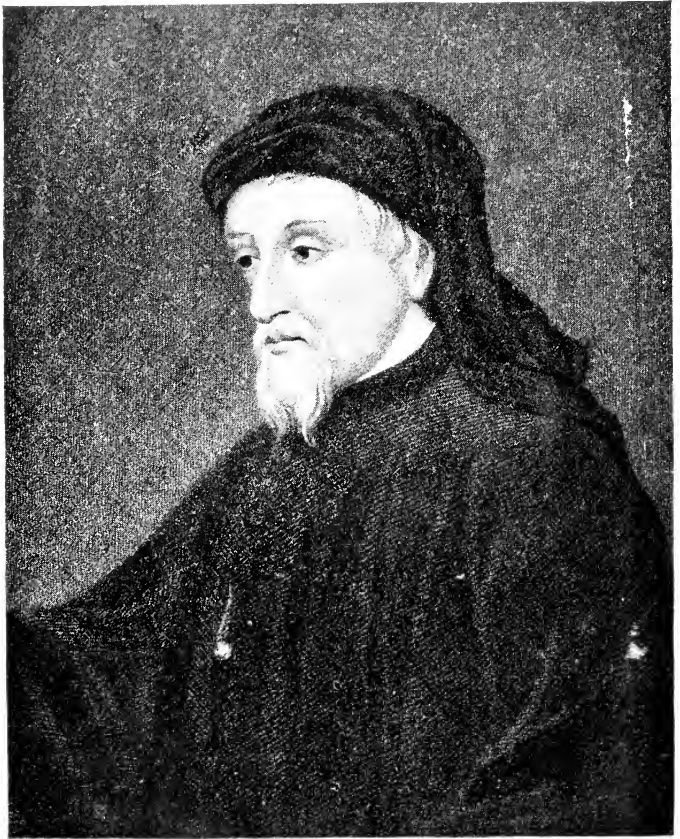


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GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

122

THE CANTERBURY TALES

BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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INTRODUCTION.



ENGLISH literature, in the strict sense of the word, dates its beginning from the latter half of the fourteenth century. Not but an English literature had existed long previous to that period. Furthermore, it reckoned among its possessions works of value, and a few which in the opinion of some display genius. But though the name was the same, the thing was essentially different. A special course of study is required for any comprehension whatever of the productions of that earliest literature; and for the easy understanding of those written even but a half century or so before the period indicated, a mastery of many peculiar syntactical constructions is demanded, and an acquaintance with a vocabulary differing in a large number of words from that now in use.

But by the middle of the fourteenth century this state of things can hardly be said to exist any longer for us. Everything by that time had become ripe for the creation of a literature of a far higher type than had yet been produced. Furthermore, conditions prevailed which, though their results could not then be foreseen, were almost certain to render the literature thus created comparatively easy of comprehension to the modern reader. The Teutonic and Romanic elements that form the groundwork of our present vocabulary had at last become completely fused. Of the various dialects prevailing, the one spoken in the vicinity of the capital had gradually lifted itself up to a preëminence it was never afterward to lose. In this parent of the present literary speech, writers found for the first time at their command a widely accepted and comparatively flexible instrument of expression. As a consequence, the literature then produced fixed definitely for all time the main lines upon which both the grammar and the vocabulary of the English speech were to develop. The result is that it now presents few difficulties for its full comprehension and appreciation that are not easily surmounted. The most effective deterrent to its wide study is one formidable only in appearance. This is the unfamiliar way in which its words are spelled; for orthography then sought to represent pronunciation, and had not in consequence crystallized into fixed forms with constant disregard of any special value to be attached to the signs by which sounds are denoted.

Of the creators of this literature — Wycliffe, Langland, Chaucer, and Gower — Chaucer was altogether the greatest as a man of letters. This is no mere opinion of the present time; there has never been a period since he flourished in which it has not been fully conceded. In his own day, his fame swept beyond the narrow limits of country and became known to the outside world. At home his reputation was firmly

established, and seems to have been established early. All the references to him by his contemporaries and immediate successors bear witness to his universally recognized position as the greatest of English poets, though we are not left by him to doubt that he had even *there* met detractors. Still the general feeling of the men of his time is expressed by his disciple Occleve, who terms him —

“The firstè finder¹ of our fair language.”

Yet not a single incident of his life has come down to us from the men who admired his personality, who enrolled themselves as his disciples, and who celebrated his praises. With the exception of a few slight references to himself in his writings, all the knowledge we possess of the events of his career is due to the mention made of him in official documents of various kinds and of different degrees of importance. In these it is taken for granted that whenever Geoffrey Chaucer is spoken of, it is the poet who is meant, and not another person of the same name. The assumption almost approaches absolute certainty; it does not quite attain to it. In those days it is clear that there were numerous Chaucers. Still, no one has yet risen to dispute his being the very person spoken of in these official papers. From these documents we discover that Chaucer, besides being a poet, was also a man of affairs. He was a soldier, a negotiator, a diplomatist. He was early employed in the personal service of the king. He held various positions in the civil service. It was a consequence that his name should appear frequently in the records. It is upon them, and the references to him in documents covering transactions in which he bore a part, that the story of his life, so far as it exists for us at all, has been mainly built. It was by them also that the series of fictitious events, which for so long a time did duty as the biography of the poet, had their impossibility as well as their absurdity exposed.

The exact date of Chaucer's birth we do not know. The most that can be said is that it must have been somewhere in the early years of the reign of Edward III. (1327-77). The place of his birth was in all probability London. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner of that city, and there is evidence to indicate that he was to some extent connected with the court. In a deed dated June 19, 1380, the poet released his right to his father's former house, which is described as being in Thames Street. The spot, however unsuitable for a dwelling-place now, was then in the very heart of urban life, and in that very neighborhood it is reasonable to suppose that Chaucer's earliest years were spent.

The first positive information we have, however, about the poet himself, belongs to 1356. In that year we find him attached to the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III. He is there in the service of the wife of that prince, but in what position we do not know. It may have been that of a page. He naturally was in attendance upon his mistress during her various journeyings; but most of her time was passed at her residence in Hatfield, Yorkshire. Chaucer next appears as having joined the army of Edward III. in his last invasion of France. This expedition was undertaken in the autumn of 1359, and continued until the peace of Bretigny, concluded in May, 1360. During this campaign he was captured somewhere and somehow — we have no knowledge beyond the bare fact. It took place,

¹ Poet.

however, before the 1st of March, 1360; for on that date the records show that the King personally contributed sixteen pounds toward his ransom.

From the last-mentioned date Chaucer drops entirely out of our knowledge till June, 1367, when he is mentioned as one of the valets of the King's chamber. In the document stating this fact he is granted a pension — the first of several he received — for services already rendered or to be rendered. It is a natural inference from the language employed, that during these years of which no record exists he was in some situation about the person of Edward III. After this time his name occurs with considerable frequency in the rolls, often connected with duties to which he was assigned. His services were varied; in some instances certainly they were of importance. From 1370 to 1380 he was sent several times abroad to share in the conduct of negotiations. These missions led him to Flanders, to France, and to Italy. The subjects were diverse. One of the negotiations in which he was concerned was in reference to the selection of an English port for a Genoese commercial establishment; another was concerning the marriage of the young monarch of England with the daughter of the King of France. It is on his first journey to Italy of which we have any record — the mission of 1372-73 to Genoa and Florence — that everybody hopes and some succeed in having an undoubting belief that Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua, and there heard from him the story of Griselda, which the Clerk of Oxford in "The Canterbury Tales" states that he learned from the Italian poet. Faith in this meeting has been rendered more difficult to accept, however, by the recently discovered fact that Chaucer was absent on this mission less than six months, instead of the eleven months with which he previously had been credited.

But Chaucer's activity was not confined to foreign missions or to diplomacy; he was as constantly employed in the civil service. In 1374 he was made controller of the great customs — that is, of wool, skins, and leather — of the port of London. In 1382 he received also the post at the same port of controller of the petty customs, that is, of wines, candles, and other articles. The regulations of this office required him to write the records with his own hand; and it is this to which Chaucer is supposed to refer in the statement he makes about his official duties in "The House of Fame." In this poem the messenger of Jupiter tells him that though he has done so much in the service of the God of Love, yet he has never received for it any compensation. He then goes on to add the following lines, which give a graphic picture of the poet and of his studious life: —

“Wherfor, as I seyde, y-wis,
 Iupiter considereth this,
 And also, beau sir, other thinges;
 That is, that thou hast no tydinges
 Of Loves folk, if they be glade,
 Ne of noght elles that god made;
 And noght only fro fer contree
 That ther no tyding comth to thee,
 But of thy verray neyghbores,
 That dwellen almost at thy dores,
 Thou herest neither that ne this;
 For whan thy labour doon al is,

And hast y-maad thy rekeninges,
 In stede of reste and newe thinges,
 Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;
 And, also domb as any stoon,
 Thou sittest at another boke,
 Til fully daswed is thy loke,
 And livest thus as an hermyte,
 Although thyn abstinence is lyte."

The Hous of Fame, ll. 641-660.

In 1386 Chaucer was elected to Parliament as knight of the shire for the county of Kent. In that same year he lost or gave up both his positions in the customs. The cause we do not know. It may have been due to mismanagement on his own part; it is far more likely that he fell a victim to one of the fierce factional disputes that were going on during the minority of Richard II. At any rate, from this time, he disappears for two years from our knowledge. But in 1389 he is mentioned as having been appointed clerk of the King's works at Westminster and various other places; in 1390 clerk of the works for St. George's chapel at Windsor. Both of these positions he held until the middle of 1391. In this last year he was made one of the commissioners to repair the roadway along the Thames, and at about the same time was appointed for-ester of North Petherton Park in Somerset, a post which he held till his death. After 1386 he seems at times to have been in pecuniary difficulties. To what cause they were owing, or how severe they were, it is the emptiest of speculations to form any conjectures in the obscurity that envelops this portion of his life. Whatever may have been his situation, on the accession of Henry IV. in September, 1399, his fortunes revived. The father of that monarch was John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III. That nobleman had pretty certainly been from the outset the patron of Chaucer; it is possible — as the evidence fails on one side, it cannot be regarded as proved — that by his marriage with Katharine Swynford he became the poet's brother-in-law. Whatever may have been the relationship, if any at all, it is a fact that one of the very first things the new king did was to confer upon Chaucer an additional pension. But the poet did not live long to enjoy the favor of the monarch. On the 24th of December, 1399, he leased for fifty-three years, or during the term of his life, a tenement in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster. But after the 5th of June, 1400, his name appears no longer on any rolls. There is accordingly no reason to question the accuracy of the inscription on his tombstone which represents him as having died October 25, 1400. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was the first, and still remains perhaps the greatest, of the English poets whose bones have there found their last resting-place.

This comprises all the facts of importance we know of Chaucer's life. Before leaving this branch of the subject, however, it may be well to say that many fuller details about his career can be found in all older accounts of the poet, and in spite of the repeated exposure of their falsity still crop up occasionally in modern books of reference. Some are objectionable only upon the ground of being untrue. Of these are such statements as that he was born in 1328; that he was a student of Oxford, to which Cambridge is sometimes added; that he was created poet-laureate; and that he was knighted. But others are objectionable not only on the ground of being false,

but of being slanderous besides. Of these the most offensive is the widely circulated and circumstantial story that he was concerned in the conflict that went on in 1382 between the city of London and the court in regard to the election of John of Northampton to the mayoralty; that in consequence of his participation in this contest he was compelled to seek refuge in the island of Zealand; that there he remained for some time, but on his return to England was arrested and thrown into the Tower; and that after having been imprisoned for two or three years, he was released at last on the condition of betraying his associates, which he accordingly did. All these details are fictitious. They were made up from inferences drawn from obscure passages in a prose work entitled "The Testament of Love." This was once attributed to the poet, but is now known not to have been written by him. Even had it been his, the statements derived from it and applied to the life of the poet would have been entirely unwarranted, as they come into constant conflict with the official records. Not being his, this piece of spurious biography has the additional discredit of constituting an unnecessary libel upon his character.

From Chaucer the man, and the man of affairs, we proceed now to the consideration of Chaucer the writer. He has left behind a body of verse consisting of more than thirty-two thousand lines, and a smaller but still far from inconsiderable quantity of prose. The latter consists mainly if not wholly of translations — one a version of that favorite work of the Middle Ages, the treatise of Boethius on the "Consolation of Philosophy"; another the tale of Melibeus in "The Canterbury Tales," which is taken directly from the French; thirdly, "The Persones Tale," derived probably from the same quarter, though its original has not as yet been discovered with certainty; and, fourthly, an unfinished treatise on the Astrolabe, undertaken for the instruction of his son Lewis. The prose of any literature always lags behind, and sometimes centuries behind, its poetry. It is therefore not surprising to find Chaucer displaying in the former comparatively little of the peculiar excellence which distinguishes his verse. In the latter but little room is found for hostile criticism. In the more than thirty thousand lines of which it is composed there occur, of course, inferior passages, and some positively weak; but taking it all in all, there is but little in it, considered as a whole, which the lover of literature as literature finds it advisable or necessary to skip. As Southey remarked, Chaucer, with the exception of Shakespeare, is the most various of all English authors. He appeals to the most diversified tastes. He wrote love poems, religious poems, allegorical poems, occasional poems, tales of common life, tales of chivalry. His range is so wide that any limited selection from his works — at best give but an inadequate idea of the variety and extent of his powers.

The canon of Chaucer's writings has now been settled with a reasonable degree of certainty. For a long time the fashion existed of imputing to him the composition of any English poem of the century following his death, which was floating about without having attached to it the name of any author. The consequence is that the older editions contain a mass of matter which it would have been distinctly discreditable for any one to have produced, let alone a great poet. This has now been gradually dropped, much to the advantage of Chaucer's reputation, though modern scholarship also refuses to admit the production by him of two or three pieces, such as "The Court of Love," "The Flower and the Leaf," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," none of which was unworthy of his powers. It is possible, indeed, that the poet himself may

have had some dread of being saddled with the responsibility of having produced pieces which he did not care to father. It is certainly suggestive that he himself took the pains on one occasion to furnish what it seems must have been at the time a fairly complete list of his writings. In the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" he gave an idea of the work which up to that period he had accomplished. The God of Love, in the interview which is there described as having taken place, inveighs against the poet for having driven men away from the service due to his deity, by the character of what he had written. He says: —

"Thou mayst hit nat denye;
For in pleyn text, with-outen nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,
That is an heresyde ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And of Criseyde thou hast seyde as thee liste,
That maketh men to wommen lasse triste,
That ben as trewe as ever was any steel."

The Legend of Good Women, ll. 327-334.

Against this charge the queen Alcestis is represented as interposing to the god a defence of the poet, in which occurs the following account of Chaucer's writings: —

"Al be hit that he can nat well endyte,
Yet hath he makid lewed folk delyte
To serve you, in preysing of your name.
He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte;
And many an ympne for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
And, for to speke of other holynesse,
He hath in prose translated Boëce,
And mad the Lyf also of scynt Cecyle;
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing."

The Legend of Good Women, ll. 414-430.

This prologue is generally conceded to have been written between 1382 and 1385. Though it does not profess to furnish a complete list of Chaucer's writings, it can fairly be assumed that it included all which he then regarded as of importance, either on account of their merit or their length. If so, the titles given above would embrace the productions of what may be called the first half of his literary career. In fact, his disciple Lydgate leads us to believe that "Troilus and Criseyde" was a comparatively early production, though it may have undergone, and probably did undergo, revision before assuming its present form. "The Legend of Good Women" — in distinction from its prologue — would naturally occupy the time of the poet

during the opening period of what is here termed the second half of his literary career. The prologue is the only portion of it, however, that is of distinctly high merit. The work was never completed, and Chaucer pretty certainly came soon to the conclusion that it was not worth completing. It was in the taste of the times; but it did not take him long to perceive that an extended work, dealing exclusively with the sorrows of particular individuals, was as untrue to art as it was to life. It fell under the ban of that criticism which in "The Canterbury Tales" he puts into the mouth of the Knight, who interrupts the doleful recital of the tragical tales told by the Monk with these words:—

“ ‘Ho!’ quod the knight, ‘good sir, namore of this,
 That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
 And mochel more; for litel hevynesse
 Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I gesse.
 I seye for me, it is a greet disese
 Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,
 To heren of hir sodeyn fal, allas!
 And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,
 As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
 And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
 And ther abydeþ in prosperitee,
 Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
 And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.’ ”

The Canterbury Tales, B, ll. 3957-3969.

Accordingly, from the composition of pieces of the one-sided and unsatisfactory character of those contained in "The Legend of Good Women," Chaucer turned to the preparation of his great work, "The Canterbury Tales." This gave him the fullest opportunity to display all his powers, and must have constituted the main literary occupation of his later life.

It will be noticed that two of the works mentioned in the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" are translations, and are so avowed. One is of "The Romaunt of the Rose," and the other of the philosophical treatise of Boethius. In regard to the version of the former, which has come down, it is sufficient to say that there was not long ago a disposition to deny the genuineness of all of it. This now contents itself with denying the genuineness of part of it. The question cannot be considered here; it is enough to say that in the opinion of the present writer, while the subject is attended with certain difficulties, the evidence is very strongly in favor of Chaucer's composition of the whole. But setting aside discussion of this point, there can scarcely be any doubt that Chaucer began his career as a translator. At the period he flourished he could hardly have done otherwise. It was an almost inevitable method of procedure on the part of a man who found neither writers nor writings in his own tongue worthy of imitation, and who could not fail to be struck not merely by the excellence of the Latin classic poets, but also by the superior culture of the Continent. In the course of his literary development he would naturally pass from direct translation to adaptation. To the latter practice he assuredly resorted often. He took the work of the foreign author as a basis, discarded what he did not need or care for, and added as little or as much as suited his own convenience. In this way the

5704 lines of the "Filostrato" of Boccaccio became 8246 in the "Troilus and Criseyde" of Chaucer; but even of the 5704 of the Italian poet, 2974 were not used by the English poet at all, and the 2730 that were used underwent considerable compression. In a similar way he composes "The Knightes Tale," probably the most perfect narrative poem in our tongue. It was based upon the "Theseide" of Boccaccio. But the latter has 9896 lines, while the former comprises but 2250, and of these 2250 fully two-thirds are entirely independent of the Italian poem.

With such free treatment of his material, Chaucer's next step would be to direct composition, independent of any sources, save in that general way in which every author is under obligation to what has been previously produced. This finds its crowning achievement in "The Canterbury Tales," though several earlier pieces—such as "The Hous of Fame," "The Parlement of Foules," and the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women"—attest that long before he had shown his ability to produce work essentially original. But though in his literary development Chaucer worked himself out of this exact reproduction of his models, through a partial working over of them till he finally attained complete independence, the habit of a translator clung to him to the very end. Even after he had fully justified his claim to being a great original poet, passages occur in his writings which are nothing but the reproduction of passages found in some foreign poem in Latin, or French, or Italian, the three languages with which he was conversant. His translation of them was due to the fact that they had struck his fancy; his insertion of them into his own work was to please others with what had previously pleased himself. Numerous passages of this kind have been pointed out; and doubtless there are others which remain to be pointed out.

There is another important thing to be marked in the history of Chaucer's development. Not only was poetic material lacking in the tongue at the time of his appearance, but also poetic form. The measures in use, while not inadequate for literary expression, were incapable of embodying it in its highest flights. Consequently, what Chaucer did not find, he had either to borrow or to invent. He did both. In the lines which have been quoted he speaks of the "balades, roundels, and vielayes," which he had composed. These were all favorite poetical forms in that Continental country with whose literature Chaucer was mainly conversant. There can be little question that he tried all manner of verse which the ingenuity of the poets of northern France had devised. As many of his shorter pieces have very certainly disappeared, his success in these various attempts cannot be asserted with positiveness. Still, what have survived show that he was a great literary artist as well as a great poet. His feats of rhyming, in particular in a tongue so little fitted for it as is ours, can be seen in his unfinished poem of "Anelida and Arcite," in "The Compleynt of Venus," and in the envoy which follows "The Clerkes Tale." In this last piece, though there are thirty-six lines, the rhymes are only three; and two of these belong to fifteen lines respectively.

But far more important than such attempts, which prove interest in versification rather than great poetic achievement, are the two measures which he introduced into our tongue. The first was the seven-line stanza. The rhyming lines in it are respectively the first and third; the second, fourth, and fifth; and the sixth and seventh. At a later period this was frequently called "rhyme royal," because the "Kingis

Quair" was written in it. For fully two centuries it was one of the most popular measures in English poetry. Since the sixteenth century, however, it has been but little employed. Far different has been the fate of the line of ten syllables, or rather of five accents. On account of its frequent use in "The Canterbury Tales" it was called for a long period, "riding rhyme"; but it now bears the title of "heroic verse." As employed by Chaucer, it varies in slight particulars from the way it is now generally used. With him the couplet character was never made prominent. The sense was not apt to end at the second line, but constantly tended to run over into the line following. There was also frequently with him an unaccented eleventh syllable; and this, though not unknown to modern verse, is not common. Still, the difference between the early and the later form are mere differences of detail, and of comparatively unimportant detail. The introduction of this measure into English may be considered Chaucer's greatest achievement in the matter of versification. The heroic verse may have existed in the tongue before he himself used it. If so, it lurked unseen and uninfluential. He was the first to employ it on a grand scale, if not to employ it at all, and to develop its capabilities. Much the largest proportion of his greatest work is written in that measure. Yet in spite of his example, it found for two centuries comparatively few imitators. It was not till the end of the sixteenth century that the measure started on a new course of life, and entered upon the great part it has since played in English versification.

The most important of what are sometimes called the minor works of Chaucer are "The Parlement of Foules," "The Hous of Fame," "Troilus and Criseyde," and "The Legend of Good Women." These are all favorable examples of his genius. But however good they may be in particular portions and in particular respects, in general excellence they yield place unquestionably to "The Canterbury Tales." It seems to have been very clearly the intention of the poet to embody in this crowning achievement of his literary life everything in the shape of a story he had already composed or was purposing to compose. Two of the pieces, the story of "Palemon and Arcite," and the "Life of St. Cecilia," as we know from the words of his already quoted, had appeared long before. The plan of the work itself was most happily conceived; and in spite of most painstaking efforts to find an original for it or suggestion of it somewhere else, there seems no sufficient reason for doubting that the poet himself was equal to the task of having devised it. No one can certainly question the felicity with which the framework for embodying the tales was constructed. All ranks and classes of society are brought together in the company of pilgrims who assemble at the Tabard Inn at Southwark to ride to the shrine of the saint at Canterbury. The military class is represented by the Knight, belonging to the highest order of the nobility, his son the Squire, and his retainer the Yeoman; the church by the Abbot, the Friar, the Parson, the Prioress with her attendant Nun, and the three accompanying Priests, and less distinctly by the Scholar, the Clerk of Oxford, and by the Pardoner and the Summoner. For the other professions are the Doctor of Physic and the Serjeant of Law; for the middle-class landholders, the Franklin; and for the various crafts and occupations, the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, the Upholsterer, the Cook, the Ploughman, the Sailor, the Reeve, the Manciple, and (joining the party in the course of the pilgrimage) the assistant of the alchemist, who is called the Canon's Yeoman. Into the mouths of these various personages were to be put tales befitting

their character and condition. Consequently, there was ample space for stories of chivalry, of religion, of love, of magic, and in truth of every aspect of social life in all its highest and lowest manifestations. Between the tales themselves were connecting links, in which the poet had the opportunity to give an account of the incidents that took place on the pilgrimage, the critical opinions expressed by the hearers of what had been told, and the disputes and quarrels that went on between various members of the party. So far as this portion of his plan was finished, these connecting links furnish some of the most striking passages in the work. In one of them—the prologue to “The Tale of the Wyf of Bathe”—the genius of the poet reaches along certain lines its highest development; while the general prologue describing the various personages of the party, though not containing the highest poetry of the work as poetry, is the most acute, discriminating, and brilliant picture of men and manners that can be found in our literature.

Such was the plan of the work. It was laid out on an extensive scale, perhaps on too extensive a scale ever to have been completed. Certain it is that it was very far from ever reaching even remotely that result. According to the scheme set forth in the prologue, the work when finished should have included over one hundred and twenty tales. It actually comprises but twenty-four. Even of these, two are incomplete: “The Cokes Tale,” which is little more than begun, and the romantic Eastern “Squieres Tale,” which, in Milton’s words, is “left half told.” To those that are finished, the connecting links have not been supplied in many cases. Accordingly, the work exists not as a perfect whole, but in eight or nine fragmentary parts, each complete in itself, but lacking a close connection with the others, though all are bound together by the unity of a common central interest. The value of what has been done makes doubly keen the regret that so much has been left undone. Politics, religion, literature, manners, are all touched upon in this wide-embracing view, which still never misses what is really essential; and added to this is a skill of portrayal by which the actors, whether narrating the tales, or themselves forming the heroes of the narration, fairly live and breathe before our eyes. Had the work been completed on the scale upon which it was begun, we should have had a picture of life and opinion in the fourteenth century more vivid and exact than has been drawn of any century before or since.

A common impression prevails that Chaucer is a very difficult author to read or understand. Nothing could be much farther from the truth. The belief is due, as has been remarked previously, to the unfamiliar orthography more than to any other one thing. It is strange; it looks uncouth, and therefore is deemed hard. But all difficulties arising from this source disappear after very brief study. On the other hand, Chaucer’s style, like that of all early writers of genius, is characterized by perfect simplicity and by consequent clearness of expression. There are very few sentences over which the reader who understands the words has to linger long in order to understand the meaning. Of course, like every early author, his language presents certain difficulties of its own. There are found in it words which have now gone out of use, and words which while still in use have changed their signification. But familiarity with all of these is a mere matter of detail and can be acquired with comparative ease.

Somewhat more serious difficulties belong to the grammar and to the metre. It

may be therefore worth while to specify the most frequently recurring variations from modern usage, that are apt at the outset to embarrass the one seeking acquaintance with the poet. There is first the general statement that the inflections are fuller than in the English of to-day. Thus the plural of the noun is usually *-es* instead of the simple *-s*. In a similar way in the case of the verb we find occasionally full forms for the preterit plural as *loveden* for *loved*. All such differences are so easily comprehended that it is only necessary here to call attention to the fact of their existence. There are, however, certain peculiar variations from modern grammar which occur constantly, and these it will be well to specify particularly.

In the case of the noun, a few, which are now regularly inflected, retained then the old plural in *-en*. Illustrations are *assen*, 'asses'; *been*, 'bees'; *ton, toon*, 'toes'; *fon*, 'foes'; and so forth.

In the case of the pronoun the plural of the pronoun of the third person is *they, hire* (variants *here, hir, her*), *hem*, instead of *they, their, them*. The nominative plural of the pronoun of the second person is always *ye*; *you* is invariably the objective. Also, *that—he, that—his*, and *that—him* constitute a relative equivalent to *who, whose, whom*. The dash indicates that a number of words intervene between the two parts of the compound relative. *That* is the ordinary relative, but before *oon* and *other* it is the definite article.

In the case of the adjective, *long* and *strong* have for their comparative *lenger* and *strenger*. A few adjectives also retain the old comparative form in *-re*, as *derre*, 'dearer'; *nerre* (*ner*), 'nearer'; *ferre*, 'farther'; *herre*, 'higher', and so forth.

In the case of the verb, the third person singular of the present tense, which regularly ends in *-th*, undergoes contraction in certain verbs whose root ends in *d* or *t*, and occasionally in *s*. Hence we have such forms as *bit*, 'bids'; *halt*, 'holds'; *rist*, 'rises'; *sit*, 'sits'; *stont*, 'stands'; and *writ*, 'writes'. The plural of the present tense occasionally ends in *-th* as *they loveth*. The imperative plural ends regularly in *-th*. The past participle of the strong verb frequently drops the final *n*, especially when preceded by the prefix *y* or *i*, as for illustration, *yfalle*, 'fallen'; *ydrawe*, 'drawn'; *yshake*, 'shaken.'

The general negative is *ne*, which is sometimes also equivalent to 'nor.' Connected with the verbs 'be' and 'have', *ne* gives us such forms as *nis*, 'is not'; *nas*, 'was not'; *nath*, 'hath not,' and *nadde* (*nad*), 'had not.' The double negative never has an affirmative sense; it always strengthens the negation. Finally, *as* is frequently an expletive, especially with the imperative, and cannot be rendered at all.

In regard to metre two general rules are to be observed. The first is that the final *-e* — the remnant of the old inflection — is to be pronounced when the next word begins with a consonant. On the other hand, it is not pronounced when that word begins with a vowel or *h* mute. To this rule there are occasional exceptions, a knowledge of which can only be gained by observation and practice. Still it may be helpful to add that certain very common words — such as *oure, youre*, and *hire* ('their') — rarely, if ever, have the final *-e* pronounced under any circumstances. Again, in certain very common words the *-e* is pronounced or not, according to the requirements of the verse. For instance, the preterit *hadde*, 'had,' may be treated as a monosyllable or as a disyllable.

The second rule is that a word is frequently accented on a different syllable from that which receives it in modern English. This syllable in Chaucer is usually the last, as may be seen in words like *honour*, *nature*, *governour*. In some dissyllabic words, however, the accent may be upon the first or second syllable to suit the requirements of the metre. To this it may be added that certain words consist of more syllables in Chaucer than in modern English. Thus *creature* is pronounced *cre-a-ture* with the principal accent on the final syllable. Similarly, *condition* is a word of four syllables, *con-dit-i-on*, — or *con-dic-i-oun* in Chaucer spelling, — the accent resting on the second and fourth syllables.

A few lines divided into feet are here given to illustrate some of the preceding statements. It is of course to be borne in mind that the second syllable of the foot is regularly the one accented.

"Whylom, | as old|e stor|ies tell|en us|,
Ther was | a duk | that hight|e Thes|eus|."
The Canterbury Tales, A, ll. 859, 860.

"Why ne hadde (=nad) | I now | thy sen|tence and | thy lore|,
The Fri|day for | to chyde, | as did|en ye|?"
The Canterbury Tales, B, ll. 4540, 4541.

"That lord | hath lit|el of | discrec|ioun|,
That in | swich cas | can no | divis|ioun|."
The Canterbury Tales, A, ll. 1779, 1780.

"And bath|ed eve|ry veyne | in swich | licour|,
Of which | vertu | engend|red is | the flour|."
The Canterbury Tales, A, ll. 3, 4.

"Souninge | in mor'al ver|tu was | his spech|e,
And glad|ly wolde | he lerne, | and glad|ly tech|e."
The Canterbury Tales, A, ll. 307, 308.

"Noght grev|eth us | your glor|ie and your | honour|;
But we | bisek|en mer|cy and | socour|."
The Canterbury Tales, A, ll. 917, 918.

In conclusion, it is never to be forgotten that Chaucer has no superior in the English tongue as a master of melody; and if a verse of his sounds inharmonious, it is either because the line is corrupt or because the reader has not succeeded in pronouncing it correctly.

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE BOOK OF THE
TALES OF CAUNTERBURY.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to
the rote,

And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete
breeth 5

Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yē, 10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrim-
ages
(And palmers for to seken straunge
strondes)

To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende 15
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they
were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they
alle,

Thur toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren
wyde,

And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to
reste, 30

So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and
space, 35

Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what
degree; 40
And eek in what array that they were
inne:

And at a knight than wol I first biginne.
A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy
man,

That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45
Trouthe and honour, fredom and cur-
teisy.

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man
ferre)

As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthi-
nesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was
wonne;

Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.

In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.

At Lyceys was he, and at Satalye,
 When they were wonne; and in the
 Grete See

At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
 And foughten for our feith at Tramis-
 sene

In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
 This ilke worthy knight had been also
 Somtyme with the lord of Palaty, 65
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
 And though that he were worthy, he was
 wys,

And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
 He never yeth no vileinye ne sayde 70
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
 For he was late y-come from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong
 SQUYER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 80
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in
 presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
 And wonderly deliver, and greet of
 strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
 In Flaundes, in Artoys, and Picardy, 86
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his goune, with sleeves longe
 and wyde. 93

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire
 ryde.

He coude songes make and wel endyte,
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye
 and wryte. 96

So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightin-
 gale.

Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts
 namo

At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of
 grene;

A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres
 lowe),

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A not-heed hadde he, with a broun vis-
 age.

Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer, 111
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of
 spere;

A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of
 grene; 116

A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
 Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and
 coy;

Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy;
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely; 123

And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel
 kepe, 130

That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
 That in hir cyppe was no ferthing sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir
 draughte. 135

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience, 142
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous

Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or
bledde. 145

Of smale houndes had she, that she
fedde

With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-
breed.

But sore weep she if oon of hem were
deed,

Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :
And al was conscience and tendre herte.

Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was; 151
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;

Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe
and reed;

But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;

For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war. 156

Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;

And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful
shene, 160

On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES

three.
- A MONK ther was, a fair for the
maistrye, 165

An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; †
A manly man, to been an abbot able.

Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in
stable :

And, whan he rood, men mighte his
brydel here

Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-

belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.

The reule of seint Maure or of seint
Beneit,

By-cause that it was old and som-del
streit,

This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the

space. 176
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,

That seith, that hunters been nat holy
men;

Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180

This is to seyn, a monk out of his
cloistre.

But thilke text held he nat worth an
oistre;

And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make him-

selven wood, 184
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,

As Austin bit? How shal the world be
served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him
reserved.

Therfore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel

in flight; 190
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he

spare.
I seigh his sleeves purfild at the hond

With grys, and that the fyneste of a
lord;

And, for to festne his hood under his
chin, 195

He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious
pin :

A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther
was.

His heed was balled, that shoon as any
glas,

And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;

His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed; 202

His botes souple, his hors in gret estat.
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;

He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.

His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.
- A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a

merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man. 209

In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.

He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.

Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215

With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the

toun :

For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,

For his ordre he was licentiat. 220
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,

And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore
 smerte. 230
 Therefore, in stede of weping and
 preyeres,
 Men moot yeve silver to the povre
 freres.
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a
 rote.
 Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
 Ther-to he strong was as a champion.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
 And everich hostiler and tappestere 241
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce 246
 For to delen with no swich poraille,
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;
 [And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;
 Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his
 haunt;] 252 *b, c*
 For thogh a widwe hadde nought a sho,
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he
 wente. 255
 His purchas was wel bettre than his
 rente.
 And rage he coude, as it were right a
 whelpe
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel
 helpe.
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre
 scoler, 260
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,

That rounded as a belle out of the
 presse.
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his English swete up-on his
 tonge; 265
 And in his harping, whan that he had
 songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.
 A MARCHANT was ther with a forked
 berd, 270
 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Sounding alway thencrees of his win-
 ning. 275
 He wolde the see were kept for any
 thing
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes
 selle.
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in
 dette, 280
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevi-
 saunce.
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-
 alle,
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him
 calle.
 A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go. 286
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever have at his beddes
 heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay
 sautrye.
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he mighte of his freendes
 hente,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye 301

Of hem that yaf him wher-with to
scoleye.

Of studie took he most cure and most
hede.

Noght o word spak he more than was
nede,

And that was seyde in forme and rever-
ence, 305

And short and quik, and ful of hy sen-
tence.

Anglyng in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly
teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and
wys,

That often hadde been at the parvyys, 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.

Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so
wyse.

Iustyce he was ful often in assyse, 314
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;

For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.

So greet a purchasour was no-wher
noon.

Al was fee simple to him in effect, 319
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.

No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.

In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were
falle.

Therto he coude endyte, and make a
thing, 325

Ther coude no wight pinche at his
wryting;

And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoornly in a medlee cote

Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres
smale;

Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330
A FRANKLEYN was in his companye;

Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.

Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in
wyn.

To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 335
For he was Epicurus owne sone,

That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verrailly felicittee parfyt.

An housholdere, and that a greet, was
he;

Seint Iulian he was in his contree. 340
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;

A bettre envyned man was no-wher
noon.

With-oute bake mete was never his
hous,

Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snowed in his hous of mete and
drinke, 345

Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,

So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in
mewe,

And many a breem and many a luce in
stewe. 350

Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce
were

Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his
gere.

His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.

At sessions ther was he lord and
sire; 355

Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas and a gipser al of silk

Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a coun-
tour;

Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour. 360
AN HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,

A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,

Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked
was; 365

Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with
bras,

But al with silver, wrought ful clene and
weel

Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,

To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,

Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;

And elles certein were they to blame. 375
It is ful fair to been y-clept "ma dame,"

And goon to vigilyes al bifore,
And have a mantel royallliche y-bore.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the
nones,

To boille the chiknes with the mary-
bones, 380
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of
London ale.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille,
and frye,

Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte
me, 385

That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
For blankmanger, that made he with the
beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by
weste:

For aught I woot, he was of Derte-
mouthe.

He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of falding to the knee. 391

A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al
broun;

And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he
y-drawe

From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chap-
man sleep.

Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer
hond,

By water he sente hem hoom to every
lond. 400

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him
bisydes,

His herberwe and his mone, his lode-
menage,

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to
Cartage. 404

Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd
been shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they
were,

From Gootland to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in
Spayne;

His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF

PHISYK, 411

In al this world ne was ther noon him
lyk

To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
In houres, by his magik naturel.

Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or
drye, 420

And where engendred, and of what
humour;

He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the
rote,

Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,

For ech of hem made other for to
winne;

Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,

And Discorides, and eek Rufus, 430
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;

Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;

Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he, 435

For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.

His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,

Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440
And yet he was but esy of dispence;

He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,

Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde

BATHE,
But she was som-del deaf, and that was
scathe. 446

Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an
haunt,

She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon

That to the offring bifore hir sholde
goon; 450

And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was
she,

That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;

I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sondag were upon hir heed.

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed, 456

Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste
and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of
hewe.
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde
fyve, 460
 Withouten other companye in youthe;
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
 And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
 She hadde passed many a straunge
stream;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at
Boloigne, 465
 In Galice at saint Iame, and at Coloigne.
 She coude mucho of wandring by the
weye:
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe; 471
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
 In felawship wel coude she laughe and
carpe.
 Of remedyes of love she knew per-
chaunce, 475
 For she coude of that art the olde
daunce.
 A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povre PERSON of a toun;
 But riche he was of holy thought and
werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde
preche;
 His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche,
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his
tythes, 486
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parissshens aboute
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer
a-sonder, 491
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, mucho and
lyte,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.

This noble ensample to his sheep he
yaf, 496
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he
taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we
truste, 501
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
 By his clenness, how that his sheep
shold live. 506
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the
myre,
 And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his
folde, 512
 So that the wolf ne made it nat mis-
carie;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous,
 He was to sinful man nat despitous, 516
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his teching discreet and benigne.
 To drawn folk to heaven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse:
 But it were any persone obstinat, 521
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the
nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher
noon is.
 He wayted after no pompe and rever-
ence, 525
 Ne made him a spyced conscience,
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-
selve.
 X With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was
his brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a
fother, 530
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or
smerte,

And thanne his neighebour right as him-
 selfe. 535

He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and
 delve,

For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.

His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.

In a tabard he rood upon a mere. 541

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
 A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
 A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were
 namo.

X The MILLER was a stout carl, for the
 nones, 545

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of
 bones;

That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
 At wastling he wolde have alwey the
 ram.

He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke
 knarre,

Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of
 harre, 550

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,

And ther-to brood, as though it were a
 spade.

Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of
 heres, 555

Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.

A swerd and bokeler bar he by his
 syde;

His mouth as greet was as a greet for-
 neys.

He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys, 560

And that was most of sinne and har-
 lotryes.

Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen
 thryes;

And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,
 pardee.

A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and
 sowne, 565

And ther-with-al he broghte us out of
 towne.

X A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a
 temple,

Of which achatours mighte take exemple
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.

For whether that he payde, or took by
 taille, 570

Algate he wayted so in his achat,
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.

Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes

ten, 576

That were of lawe expert and curious;
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that
 hous,

Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and
 lond

Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580

To make him live by his propre good,
 In honour dettelees, but he were wood,

Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire

In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller
 cappe. 586

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.

His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.

Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
 Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene. 592

Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
 Ther was noon auditour coude on him
 winne.

Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the
 reyn, 595

The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,

His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his
 pultrye,

Was hoolly in this reves governing, 599

And by his covenaut yaf the rekening,
 Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;

Ther coude no man bringe him in arrer-
 age.

Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his
 covyne; 604

They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
 His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth.

With grene treës shadwed was his place.
 He coude bettre than his lord purchace.

Ful riche he was astored prively,
 His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,

To yeve and lene him of his owne
 good, 611

And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.

In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;

He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,

Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute, 621
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,

That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a spawe; 626

With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;

Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimston,

Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon, 630
Ne oynment that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his welkes whyte,

Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.

Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,

And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635

Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.

And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,

Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,

That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day; 641

And eek ye knowen wel, how that a Iay
Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.

But who-so coude in other thing him grope,

Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophy; 645

Ay 'Questio quid iuris' wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;

A better felawe sholde men nocht finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,

A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:

Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,

He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655

But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.

'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;

Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede — 660

For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth —

And also war him of a *significavit*.
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse

The yonge girles of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir

reed. 665

A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;

A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.
With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER

Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670

That streight was comen from the court of Rome.

Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'

This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.

This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax, 675

But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,

And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;

But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;

But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet. 681

Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet;

Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.

Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an bare. 684

A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.

His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al
hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-
shave; 690

I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardonr.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady
veyl: 695

He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sēynt Peter hadde, whan that he
wente

Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of
stones,

And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700
But with these relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes
tweye.

And thus, with feyned flaterye and
Iapes, 705
He made the person and the peple his
apes.

But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710
For wel he wiste, whan that song was
songe,

He moste preche, and wel affyle his
tonge,

To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a
clause, 715

Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek
the cause

Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the
Belle.

But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye aight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,

That ye narette it nat my vileinye, 726
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this
matere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.

For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,

He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and
large;

Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewé,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes
newe. 736

He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his
brother;

He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him
rede,

The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.

Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde
stonde; 745

My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everi-
chon,

And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke
us leste. 750

A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-
taught, 755

And of manhood him lakkede right
naught.

Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere
things,

Whan that we hadde maad our reken-
inges; 760

And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges,
trewely,

Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a cor
pauye

At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765
 Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I
 how.
 And of a mirthe I am right now bi-
 thoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste
 noght.
 Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow
 spede,
 The blisful martir quyte yow your
 mede. 770
 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
 For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
 To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
 And therefore wol I maken yow disport,
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som con-
 fort. 776
 And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
 Now for to stonden at my Iugement,
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the
 weye, 780
 Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
 But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn
 heed.
 Hold up your hond, withouten more
 speche.
 Our counsel was nat longe for to
 seche;
 Us thoughte it was noght worth to make
 it wys, 785
 And graunted him withouten more avys,
 And bad him seye his verdit, as him
 leste.
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth
 for the beste;
 But tak it not, I prey yow, in desleyn;
 This is the poynt, to speken short and
 pleyn 790
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your
 weye,
 In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
 To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
 And hom-ward he shal tellen othere
 two,
 Of adventures that whylom han bifalle.
 And which of yow that bereth him best
 of alle, 796
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
 Tales of best sentence and most solas,
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost
 Here in this place, sitting by this post,

Whan that we come agayn fro Caunter-
 bury. 801
 And for to make yow the more mery,
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your
 gyde.
 And who-so wol my Iugement with-
 seye 805
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the
 weye.
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
 Tel me anon, with-uten wordes mo,
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.
 This thing was graunted, and our
 othes swore 810
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him
 also
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
 And that he wolde been our governour,
 And of our tales Iuge and reportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
 And we wold reuled been at his devys,
 In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon
 assent,
 We been acorded to his Iugement.
 And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
 With-uten any lenger tarynge. 821
 A-morwe, whan that day bigan to
 springe,
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
 And forth we riden, a litel more than
 pas, 825
 Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
 And there our host bigan his hors areste,
 And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow
 leste.
 Ye woot your forward, and I it yow re-
 corde.
 If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
 As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
 Who-so he rebel to my Iugement
 Shal paye for al that by the weye is
 spent.
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer
 twinne; 835
 He which that hath the shortest shal bi-
 ginne.
 Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and
 my lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.

Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prior-
esse;

And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfast-
nesse, 840

Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every
man.'

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,

And shortly for to tellen, as it was,

Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,

The sothe is this, the cut fil to the
knight, 845

Of which ful blythe and glad was every
wight;

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,

By forward and by composicioun,

*Here endeth the prolog of this book; and here biginneth the first tale, which is the
Knichtes Tale.*

As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes
mo?

And whan this gode man saugh it was
so, 850

As he that wys was and obedient

To kepe his forward by his free assent,

He seyde: 'Sin I shal biginne the game,

What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes
name!

Now lat us ryde, and herkneþ what I
seye.' 855

And with that word we riden forth our
weye;

And he bigan with right a mery chere

His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

*Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
Prelia, laurigero, &c.*

[Statius, *Theb.* xii. 519.]

WHYLOM, as olde stories tellen us,

Ther was a duk that highte Theseus; 860

Of Athenes he was lord and governour,

And in his tyme swich a conquerour,

That gretter was ther noon under the
sonne.

Ful many a riche contree hadde he
wonne;

What with his wisdom and his chival-
rye, 865

He conquered al the regne of Femenye,

That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;

And weddede the quene Ipolita,

And broghte hir hoom with him in his
contree

With muchel glorie and greet solempni-
tee, 870

And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.

And thus with victorie and with melodye

Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,

And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.

And certes, if it nere to long to
here, 875

I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye

By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;

And of the grete bataille for the nones

Bitwixen Athenes and Amazones; 880

And how asseged was Ipolita,

The faire hardy quene of Scithia;

And of the feste that was at hir weddunge,

And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;

But al that thing I moot as now for-
bere. 885

I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,

And wayke been the oxen in my plough.

The remenant of the tale is long y-nough.

I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;

Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,

And lat see now who shal the soper

winne; 891

And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

This duk, of whom I make mencionioun,

When he was come almost unto the
toun,

In al his wele and in his moste pryde, 895

He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,

Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye

A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,

Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;

But swich a cry and swich a wo they
 make, 900
 That in this world nis creature livinge,
 That herde swich another weymentinge;
 And of this cry they nolde never stenten,
 Til they the reynes of his brydel hentent.
 'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-
 cominge 905
 Perturben so my feste with cryinge?'
 Quod Theseus, 'have ye so greet envye
 Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and
 crye?
 Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?
 And telleth me if it may been amended;
 And why that ye ben clothed thus in
 blak?' 911
 The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
 When she hadde swowned with a deedly
 chere,
 That it was routhe for to seen and here,
 And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune
 hath yiven 915
 Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
 Noght greveth us your glorie and your
 honour;
 But we breken mercy and socour.
 Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.
 Som drope of pitee, thiurgh thy gentil-
 lesse, 920
 Up-on us wrecched women lat thou
 falle.
 For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,
 That she nath been a duchesse or a
 quene;
 Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
 Thanked be Fortune, and hir false
 wheel, 925
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.
 And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,
 Here in the temple of the goddesse
 Clemence
 We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy
 might. 930
 I wrecche, which that wepe and waille
 thus,
 Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
 That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
 And alle we, that been in this array,
 And maken al this lamentacioun, 935
 We losten alle our housbondes at that
 toun,
 Whyll that the sege ther-aboutte lay.

And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!
 That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
 Fullild of ire and of inquitee, 940
 He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,
 To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
 Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,
 Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
 And wol nat suffren hem, by noon
 assent, 945
 Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
 But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.'
 And with that word, with-ouen more
 respyt,
 They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,
 'Have on us wrecched women som
 mercy, 950
 And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'
 This gentil duk down from his courser
 sterte
 With herte pitous, whan he herde hem
 speke.
 Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
 Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so
 mat, 955
 That whylom weren of so greet estat.
 And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
 And hem comforteth in ful good entente;
 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe
 knight, 959
 He wolde doon so ferforthly his might
 Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
 That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
 How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel de-
 served. 964
 And right anoon, with-ouen more abood,
 His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
 To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
 No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde,
 Ne take his ese fully half a day,
 But onward on his wey that night he
 lay; 970
 And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
 And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
 Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwelle;
 And forth he rit; ther nis namore to
 telle.
 The rede statue of Mars, with spere
 and targe, 975
 So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
 That alle the feeldes gliteren up and
 down;
 And by his baner born is his penoun

Of gold ful riche, in which ther was
y-bete

The Minotaur, which that he slough in
Crete. 980

Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Faïre in a feeld, ther as he thoghte
fighte.

But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985
With Creon, which that was of Thebes
king,

He faught, and slough him manly as a
knight

In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to
flight;

And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre,
and rafter; 990

And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were
slayn,

To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.

But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the wayment-
inge 995

That the ladyes made at the brenninge
Of the bodies, and the grete honour

That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him
wente;

But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feeld he took al night his
reste,

And dide with al the contree as him leste.
To ransake in the tas of bodyes
dede, 1005

Hem for to strepe of harneys and of
wede,

The pilours diden bisnesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture.

And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody
wounde, 1010

Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
And that other knight hight Palamon.
Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they
were, 1015

But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,

The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
As they that weren of the blood royal
Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.

Out of the tas the pilours han hem
torn, 1020

And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetually, he nolde no ransoun.

And whan this worthy duk hath thus
y-don, 1025

He took his host, and hoom he rood
anon

With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And there he liveth, in loye and in
honour,

Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes
mo?

And in a tour, in angwish and in wo, 1030
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem
quyte.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by
day,

Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035

Than is the lillie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures
newe —

For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
I noot which was the fairer of hem two —
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040

She was arisen, and al redy dight;
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.

The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn obser-
vaunce.' 1045

This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.

Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse;
Hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse,

Behinde hir bak, a yerde long, I
gesse. 1050

And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
She walketh up and down, and as hir
liste

She gadereth floures, party whyte and
rede,

To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055

The grete tour, that was so thikke and
strong,

Which of the castel was the chief don-
geoun,
Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene Ioynant to the gardin-wal, 1060
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyng.
Bright was this sonne, and cleer that
morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on
heigh, 1065
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches
grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romed up and
doun.
His sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Booth in the chambre, roming to and
fro, 1071
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a
barre 1075
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde
'a!'
As though he stongen were un-to the
herte. 1079
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon
offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
From wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
That yeven us this, al-though we hadde
it sworn;
So stood the heven whan that we were
born; 1090
We moste endure it: this is the short and
pleyn.'
This Palamon answerde, and seyde
ageyn,
Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
How hast a veyn imaginacioun.
His prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095

But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn
yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil 1104
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may
scapen.
And if so be my destinee be shapen
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannye.'
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte
him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded
sore, 1115
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir
grace, 1120
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'
This Palamon, whan he tho wordes
herde,
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:
'Whether seistow this in earnest or in
pley?' 1125
'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in earnest, by my
fey!
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'
This Palamon gan knitte his browes
tweye:
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet
honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour 1130
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren
me 1137

In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, cer-
teyn;

I wot right wel, thou darst it nat with-
seyn. 1140

Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat
so. 1145

I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
To forthe me, as I have told biforn.
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might, 1150
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'

This Arcitè ful proudly spak ageyn,
'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals
than I;

But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
For *par amour* I loved hir first er
thow. 1155

What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet
now

Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;

For which I tokle thee myn aventure 1160
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.

I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'

Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, 1165
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.

And therefore positif lawe and swich de-
cree

Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love, maugree his
heed.

He may nat fleen it, though he sholde be
deed, 1170

Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,

To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verraily,

That thou and I be dampned to pris-
oun 1175

Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.
We stryve as didè the houndes for the

boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was
noon;

Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were
wrothe,

And bar away the boon bitwixe hem
bothe. 1180

And therefore, at the kinges court, my
brother,

Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.

Here in this prisoun mote we en-
dure, 1185

And everich of us take his aventure,
Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe
hem tweye,

If that I hadde leyser for to seye;
But to thesfect. It happed on a day,

(To telle it yow as shortly as I may) 1190
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,

That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children

lyte,

Was come to Athenes, his felawe to
visyte,

And for to pleye, as he was wont to
do, 1195

For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.

So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to

telle,
His felawe wente and soghte him doun
in helle; 1200

But of that story list me nat to wryte.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,

And hadde him knowe at Thebes year
by yere;

And fynally, at requeste and preyere
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,

Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-

al, 1205

In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal.
This was the forward, pleynly for ten-
dyte,

Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite: 1210
That if so were, that Arcite were y-

founde
Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde

In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,

That with a swerd he sholde lese his
heed; 1215

Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,

But taketh his leve, and homward he him
 spedde;
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!
 How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte
 smyte; 1220
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was
 born!
 Now is my prison worse than biforn;
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle 1225
 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.
 Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus
 y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in
 wo. 1230
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
 Though that I never hir grace may de-
 serve,
 Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.
 O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he, 1234
 Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;
 In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I thab-
 sence.
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir pres-
 ence, 1240
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
 That by som cas, sin fortune is change-
 able,
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despair, 1245
 That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
 Ne creature, that of hem maketh is,
 That may me helpe or doon confort in
 this.
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and
 distresse;
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my glad-
 nesse! 1250
 Allas, why pleynten folk so in com-
 mune
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel better than they can hem-self de-
 vyse?
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse,

That cause is of his mordre or greet sik-
 nesse. 1256
 And som man wolde out of his prison
 fayn,
 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.
 Infinite harmes been in this matere;
 We witen nat what thing we preyen
 here. 1260
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous,
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righte wey is
 thider;
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.
 And certes, in this world so faren we;
 We seken faste after felicitee, 1266
 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,
 Than hadde I been in loye and perfite
 hele, 1271
 Ther now I am exyled from my wele.
 Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
 I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'
 Up-on that other syde Palamon, 1275
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
 Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete
 tour
 Resouneth of his youling and clamour.
 The pure fettres on his shines grete
 Weren of his bittre salte teres wete. 1280
 'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcite, cosin myn,
 Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is
 thyn.
 Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy
 large,
 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
 Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and
 manhede, 1285
 Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
 And make a werre so sharp on this
 citee,
 That by som aventure, or som trettee,
 Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
 For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.
 For, as by wey of possibilitee, 1291
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a
 cage. 1294
 For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,
 With al the wo that prison may me
 yive,

And eek with peyne that love me yiveth
also,
That doubleth al my torment and my
wo.'

Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterete
With-inne his brest, and hente him by
the herte 1300

So woodyly, that he lyk was to biholde
The box-tree, or the asschen dede and
colde.

Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that
governe

This world with binding of your word
eterne, 1304

And wryten in the table of athamaunt
Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,
What is mankinde more un-to yow holde
Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the
folde?

For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee! 1312

What governaunce is in this prescience,
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?

And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfillen.

And whan a beest is deed, he hath no
peyne;

But man after his death moot wepe and
pleyne, 1320

Though in this world he have care and
wo:

With-ouen doute it may stonden so.
The answer of this I lete to divynis,
But wel I woot, that in this world gret
pyne is.

Allas! I see a serpent or a thief, 1325
That many a trewe man hath doon mes-
cheef,

Goon at his large, and wher him list may
turne.

But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,
And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek
wood, 1329

That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.'

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,

And of Arcite forth I wol yow telle. 1336
The somer passeth, and the nightes
longe

Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
Bothe of the lover and the prisoner.

I noot which hath the wofullere mester.
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun 1341

Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fetteres to ben deed;
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed
For ever-mo as out of that contree, 1345
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?

That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway. 1350

That other wher him list may ryde or go,
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.

Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

*Explicit prima Pars. Sequitur pars
secunda.*

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen
was, 1355

Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde
'allas,'

For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
And shortly to concluden al his wo,

So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may
dure. 1360

His sleep, his mete, his drink is him
biraft,

That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;

His hewe falwe, and pale as asschen
colde,

And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And wailling al the night, making his
mone. 1366

And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be
stent;

So feble eek were his spirits, and so
lowe,

And chaunged so, that no man coude
knowe 1370

His speche nor his vois, though men it
herde.

And in his gere, for al the world he
ferde.

Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
 Endengred of humour malencolyk, 1375
 Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
 Of him, this woful loveure daun Arcite.
 What sholde I al-day of his wo endy-
 dyte? 1380
 Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
 This cruel torment, and this peyne and
 wo,
 At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
 Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,
 Him thoughte how that the winged god
 Mercurie 1385
 Biforn him stood, and bad him to be
 murye.
 His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
 An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.
 Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)
 As he was whan that Argus took his
 sleep; 1390
 And seyde him thus: 'To Athenes shaltou
 wende;
 Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
 And with that word Arcite wook and
 sterte.
 'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'
 Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I
 fare; 1395
 Ne for the drede of death shal I nat spare
 To see my lady, that I love and serve;
 In hir presence I recche nat to serve.'
 And with that word he caughte a greet
 mirour,
 And saugh that chaunged was al his
 colour, 1400
 And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
 And right anon it ran him in his minde,
 That, sith his face was so disfigured
 Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
 He mighte wel, if that he bar him
 lowe, 1405
 Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
 And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
 And right anon he chaunged his array,
 And cladde him as a povre laborer,
 And al allone, save oonly a squyer, 1410
 That knew his privetee and al his cas,
 Which was dysgyed povrely, as he was,
 To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.
 And to the court he wente up-on a day,

And at the gate he profreth his ser-
 vyse, 1415
 To drugge and drawe, what so men wol
 devyse.
 And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
 He fil in office with a chamberleyn,
 The which that dwelling was with Emelye.
 For he was wys, and coude soon aspye
 Of every servaunt, which that serveth
 here. 1421
 Wel coude he hewen wode, and water
 bere,
 For he was yong and mighty for the
 nones,
 And ther-to he was strong and big of
 bones 1424
 To doon that any wight can him devyse.
 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the
 brighte;
 And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.
 But half so wel biloved a man as he
 Ne was ther never in court, of his de-
 gree; 1430
 He was so gentil of condicioun,
 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
 They seyden, that it were a charitee
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his de-
 gree, 1434
 And putten him in worshipful servyse,
 Ther as he mighte his vertu exercyse.
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is
 spronge
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer
 That of his chambre he made him a
 squyer, 1440
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
 And eek men broghte him out of his
 contree
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,
 That no man wondred how that he it
 hadde. 1445
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he
 ladde,
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte. 1450
 In derknesse and horrible and strong
 prououn
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,

Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse;
 Who feleth double soor and hevynesse
 But Palamon? that love destreyneth
 so, 1455

That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
 And eek therto he is a prisoner
 Perpetually, noght oonly for a yeer.
 Who coude ryme in English proprely
 His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat
 I; 1460

Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seventh yeer, in May,
 The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,
 That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)

Were it by aventure or destinee, 1465
 (As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
 That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
 By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,
 And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
 For he had yive his gayler drinke so 1470
 Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
 With narcotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,
 That al that night, thogh that men wolde
 him shake,

The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
 And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he
 may. 1475

The night was short, and faste by the day,
 That nedes-cost he moste him-selven
 hyde,

And til a grove, faste ther besyde,
 With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
 For shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480
 That in that grove he wolde him hyde al
 day,

And in the night than wolde he take his
 way

To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
 And shortly, outhere he wolde lese his
 lyf, 1485

Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
 This is the effect and his entente pleyn.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,
 That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
 Til that fortune had brought him in the
 snare. 1490

The bisy larke, messenger of day,
 Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;
 And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
 That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
 And with his stremes dryeth in the
 greves 1495

The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.
 And Arcite, that is in the court royal
 With Theseus, his squyer principal,
 Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
 And, for to doon his observaunce to
 May, 1500

Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
 He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,
 Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
 Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
 And to the grove, of which that I yow
 tole, 1505

By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
 To maken him a gerland of the greves,
 Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves,
 And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
 'May, with alle thy floures and thy
 grene, 1510

Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
 I hope that I som grene gete may.'
 And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
 In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
 And in a path he rometh up and
 down, 1515

Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
 Was in a bush, that no man mighte him
 see,

For sore afered of his deeth was he.
 No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
 God wot he wolde have trowed it ful
 lyte. 1520

But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
 That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath
 eres.'

It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
 For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe, 1525
 That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,
 For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.

Whan that Arcite had romed al his
 fille,

And songen al the roundel lustily,
 In-to a studie he fil sodeynly, 1530
 As doon thise loveres in hir queynte
 geres,

Now in the crophe, now down in the
 breres,

Now up, now down, as boket in a well.
 Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
 Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,
 Right so can gery Venus overcaste 1536
 The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day
 Is greful, right so chaungeth she array.

Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.
 Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan
 to syke, 1540
 And sette him down with-outen any
 more:
 'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was
 bore!
 How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,
 Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
 Allas! y-brought is to confusioun 1545
 The blood royal of Cadme and Am-
 phioun;
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste
 man
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun
 bigan,
 And of the citee first was crowned king,
 Of his linage am I, and his of-spring 1550
 By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
 And now I am so caitif and so thral,
 That he, that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.
 And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame,
 For I dar nocht biknowe myn owne
 name; 1556
 But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
 Now highte I Philostrate, nocht worth a
 myte.
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al
 fordo, 1560
 Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,
 That Theseus martyreth in prison.
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
 Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful
 herte, 1565
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my
 sherte.
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
 Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye.
 Of al the remenant of myn other care
 Ne sette I nat the mounsaunce of a
 tare, 1570
 So that I coude don aught to your ples-
 aunce!''
 And with that word he fil down in a
 traunce
 A longe tyme; and after he up-sterete.
 This Palamoun, that thoughte that
 thurgh his herte
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche
 glyde, 1575

For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he
 hyde.
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face deed and
 pale,
 He sterete him up out of the buskes
 thikke,
 And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour
 wikke, 1580
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have al this peyne and
 wo,
 And art my blood, and to my counseil
 sworn,
 As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
 And hast by-iaped here duk Theseus,
 And falsly changed hast thy name
 thus; 1586
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
 But I wol love hir only, and namo;
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo. 1590
 And though that I no wepne have in
 this place,
 But out of prison am astert by grace,
 I drede nocht thet outhur thou shalt dye,
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt
 nat asterte.' 1595
 This Arcite, with ful despitous herte
 Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale
 herd,
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,
 And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,
 Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for
 love. 1600
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this
 place
 Thou sholdest never out of this grove
 pace,
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
 For I defy the seurtee and the bond
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad
 to thee. 1605
 What, verray fool, think wel that love is
 free,
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
 But, for as muche thou art a worthy
 knight
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
 I have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol
 nat fayle, 1610
 With-outen witing of any other wight,

That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for
thee;

And chees the beste, and leve the worste
for me.

And mete and drinke this night wol I
bringe 1615

Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy
beddinge.

And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am
inne,

Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it
thee.' 1620

And thus they been departed til a-
morwe,

When ech of hem had leyd his feith to
borwe.

O cupide, out of alle charitee!

O regne, that wolt no felawe have with
thee!

Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lord-
shipe 1625

Wol noight, his thankes, have no felawe-
shipe;

Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.

Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,

And on the morwe, er it were dayes
light,

Ful prively two harneys hath he
dight, 1630

Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld betwix hem
tweyne.

And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;

And in the grove, at tyme and place y-
set, 1635

This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;

Right as the hunter in the regne of
Trace,

That stondesth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,

And hereth him come russhing in the
greves, 1641

And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel
enemy,

With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I ;
For outhur I mot sleen him at the
gappe, 1645

Or he mot sleen me, if that me mis-
happe :'

So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.

Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;
But streight, with-uten word or rehers-
ing, 1650

Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
As frendly as he were his owne brother;

And after that, with sharpe speres
stronge

They foynen ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun

In his fighting were a wood leoun, 1656
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite :

As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whyte as foom for ire
wood.

Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting
dwelle; 1661

And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.
The destinee, ministre general,

That executeth in the world over-al
The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn
biforn, 1665

So strong it is, that, though the world
had sworn

The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day

That falleth nat est with-inne a thousand
yere.

For certainly, our appetytes here, 1670
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.

This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to honten is so desirous,

And namely at the grete hert in May, 1675
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde

With hunte and horn, and houndes him
bisyde.

For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
That it is al his Ioye and appetyt 1680

To been him-self the grete hertes bane;
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er
this,

And Theseus, with alle Ioye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene, 1685

And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On hunting be they riden royally.

And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,

In which ther was an hert, as men him
tolde,
Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath
holde. 1690
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
For thider was the hert wont have his
flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his
weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or
tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list
comaunde. 1695
And when this duk was come un-to the
launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores
two;
The brighte swerdes wenten to and
fro 1700
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores
smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,
That smyteth any strook, that I may
seen!
But telth me what mister men ye
been, 1710
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-uten Iuge or other officere,
As it were in listes royally?'
This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: 'sire, what nedeth wordes
mo? 1715
We have the death deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two cay-
tyves,
That been embred of our owne lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe
it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That for thy lond is banished on his
heed, 1725

For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he laped thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has makend him thy chief
squyer; 1730
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleynly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wik-
kedly. 1735
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therefore I axe deeth and my Iuwyse;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 1740
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it re-
corde, 1745
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the
corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the
rede!'
The quene anon, for verray womman-
hede
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and
sore 1755
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us women
alle!'
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he
stood, 1759
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and
sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the
cause:
And al-though that his ire hir gilt ac-
cused, 1765
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;

As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
 Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,
 And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;
 And eek his herte had compassioun 1770
 Of women, for they wepen ever in oon;
 And in his gentil herte he thoghte anon,
 And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy
 Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
 But been a leoun, bothe in word and
 dede, 1775
 To hem that been in repentaunce and
 drede

As wel as to a proud despitous man
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
 That in swich cas can no divisoun, 1780
 But weyeth pryde and humblesse after
 oon.'

And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
 He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
 And spak thise same wordes al on
 highte: —

'The god of love, a! *benedicite*, 1785
 How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
 Ayeins his might ther gayneth none
 obstacles,

He may be cleded a god for his miracles;
 For he can maken at his owne gyse
 Of everich herte, as that him list de-
 vyse. 1790

Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
 That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
 And that hir deeth lyth in my might
 also, 1795

And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
 Y-brought hem hider bothe for to dye!
 Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
 Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
 Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
 Se how they blede! be they nocht wel
 arrayed? 1801

Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-
 payed

Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may
 bifalle! 1805

But this is yet the beste game of alle,
 That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,
 Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me;
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,

By God, than woot a cokkow or an
 hare! 1810

But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.

And therefore, sin I knowe of loves
 peyne, 1815

And woot how sore it can a man dis-
 treyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his
 las,

I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas,
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth
 here,

And eek of Emelye, my suster dere. 1820
 And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
 That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,
 Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
 But been my freendes in al that ye may;
 I yow foryeve this trespas every del.' 1825
 And they him swore his axing fayre and
 wel,

And him of lordshipe and of mercy
 preyde,
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus
 he seyde:

'To speke of royal linage and richesse,
 Though that she were a quene or a prin-
 cesse, 1830

Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
 To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
 I speke as for my suster Emelye,
 For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye;
 Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden
 two 1835

At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:
 That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
 He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef;
 This is to seyn, she may nat now han
 bothe, 1839

Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe.
 And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
 That ech of yow shal have his destinee
 As him is shape; and herkneth in what
 wyse;

Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,
 With-uten any replicacioun, 1846
 If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
 That everich of yow shal gon wher him
 leste

Frely, with-uten raunson or daunger;

And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 1850
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred
knightes,

Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.

And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whether of yow bothe that hath
might, 1856

This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve, 1860
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a
grace.

The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even Iuge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or
taken. 1866

And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'

Who loketh lightly now but Pala-
moun? 1870

Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it en-
dyte,

The Ioye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But doun on knees wente every maner
wight, 1875

And thanked him with al her herte and
might,

And namely the Thebens ofte sythe.
And thus with good hope and with herte
blythe

They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne
they ryde 1879

To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

*Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars
tercia.*

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
To maken up the listes royally;
That swich a noble theatre as it was, 1885
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther
nas.

The circuit a myle was aboute,

Walled of stoon, and diche al with-
oute. 1888

Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
That, whan a man was set on o degree,
He letted nat his felawe for to see.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel
whyt,

West-ward, right swich another in the
opposit. 1894

And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
That geometric or ars-metrik can,
Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and
wages 1900

The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to doon his ryte and sacrificyse,
He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
In worship of Venus, goddesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905
And west-ward, in the minde and in
memorie

Of Mars, he maked hath right swich
another,

That coste largely of gold a fother.
And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,
Of alabastre whyt and reed coral 1910
An oratorie riche for to see,

In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
The shap, the countenance, and the
figures,

That weren in t

First in the t
see

Wrought on the v
The broken slep
The sacred teres, and the waymenting;
The fyry strokes of the desiring, 1922
That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;
The othes, that hir covenants assuren;
Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardi-
nesse, 1925

Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,
Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,
Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye,
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand; 1930
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,

Lust and array, and alle the circum-
staunces
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne
shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal, 1934
And mo than I can make of mencion.
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon, 1941
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes—
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage. 1946
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne rich-
esse,
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardi-
nesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye;
For as hir list the world than may she
gye. 1950
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir
las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
And though I coude rekne a thousand
mo.
The statue of Venus, glorious for to
see, 1955
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navel down all covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any
glas.
A citole in hir right hand hadde she, 1959
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres wings hadde he two;
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and
kene. 1966
Why sholde I noght as wel cek telle
yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the
rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and
brede, 1970
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,

That highte the grete temple of Mars in
Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn man-
sioun.
First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne
beste, 1976
With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every
bough: 1980
And downward from an hille, under a
bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipo-
tente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which
thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
And ther-out cam a rage and such a
vese, 1985
That it made al the gates for to rese.
The northren light in at the dores shoon,
For windowe on the wal ne was ther
noon,
Thurgh which men mighten any light dis-
cerne.
The dores were alle of adamant eterne,
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong 1991
With iren tough; and, for to make it
strong,
Every piler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and
shene.
Ther saugh I first the derke imagin-
ing 1995
Of felonye, and al the compassing;
The cruel ire, reed as any glode;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;
The shepne brenning with the blake
smoke; 2000
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bi-
bledde;
Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp man-
ace;
Al ful of chirking was that sory place.
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,
His herte-blood hath bathed al his
heer; 2006
The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;

The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-
right.

Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,
With discomfort and sory contenaunce.
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his
rage; 2011

Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers out-
rage.

The careyne in the bush, with throte y-
corve :

A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm
y-storve;

The tiraunt, with the prey by force
y-raft; 2015

The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing
laft.

Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppes-
teres;

The hunte strangled with the wilde beres :
The sowe freten the child right in the
cradel;

The cook y-scalded, for al his longe
ladel. 2020

Noght was foryeten by the infortune of
Marte;

The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher, and the
smith 2025

That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saw I conquest sittinge in grect honour,
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanging by a sotil twynes threed. 2030

Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by fig-
ure; 2035

So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I
wolde. 2040

The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus. 2045
This god of armes was arrayed thus :—

A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet ;
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie.

Now to the temple of Diane the
chaste 2051

As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.

Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee. 2055

Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,

Was turned from a womman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;

Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no
ferre; 2060

Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may
see.

Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,

But Penneus doughter, which that highte
Dane.

Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al
naked; 2066

I saugh how that his houndes have him
caught,

And freten him, for that they knewe him
naught.

Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,

And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroughte him care and
wo. 2072

Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawn to mem-
orie.

This goddesse on an hert ful hie
sect, 2075

With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a
mone,

Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone.
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With howe in honde, and arwes in a
cas. 2080

Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto bath his derke regioun.

A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle, 2085

And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of
alle.'

Wel couthe he peynten lyffy that it
wroghte,

With many a florin he the hewes boghte.

Now ben these listes maad, and Theseus,

That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090

The temples and the theatre every del,

When it was doon, him lyked wonder
wel.

But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of hir retourn-
inge, 2095

That everich sholde an hundred knightes
bringe,

The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;

And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,

Hath everich of hem brought an hundred
knightes

Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.

And sikerly, ther trowed many a man 2101

That never, sithen that the world bigan,

As for to speke of knighthod of hir
hond,

As fer as God hath maked see or lond,

Nas, of so fewe, so noble a com-
panye. 2105

For every wight that lovede chivalrye,

And wolde, his thankes, han a passant
name,

Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that
game;

And wel was him, that ther-to chosen
was.

For if ther fille to-morwe swich a
cas, 2110

Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,

That loveth paramours, and hath his
might,

Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,

They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be
there.

To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!* 2115

It were a lusty sighte for to see.

And right so ferden they with Palamon.

With him ther wenten knightes many
oon;

Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,

In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;

And somme woln have a peyre plates
large; 2121

And somme woln have a Puce sheld, or
a targe;

Somme woln ben armed on hir legges
weel,

And have an ax, and somme a mace of
steel.

Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas
old. 2125

Armed were they, as I have you told,

Everich after his opinioun.

Ther maistow seen coming with Pala-
moun

Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his
face. 2130

The cercles of his eyen in his heed,

They gloweden bitwixe yellow and reed;

And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,

With kempe heres on his browes
stoute;

His limes grete, his braunes harde and
stronge, 2135

His shuldres brode, his armes rounde
and longe.

And as the gyse was in his contree,

Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,

With foure whyte boles in the trays.

In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,

With nayles yelwe and brighte as any
gold, 2141

He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.

His longe heer was kembd bihinde his
bak,

As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak :

A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge
wighte, 2145

Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,

Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.

Aboute his char ther wenten whyte
alaunts,

Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,

To hunten at the leoun or the deer, 2150

And solwed him, with mosel faste y-
bounde,

Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.

An hundred lordes hadde he in his
route

Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and
stoute. 2154

With Arcita, in stories as men finde,

The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,

Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,

Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel

Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.

His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars,

Couched with perles whyte and rounde
and grete. 2161

His sadel was of brend gold newe y-
bete;

A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
His crispe heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,
And that was yelow, and glitered as the
sonne. 2166

His nose was heigh, his eyen bright
citryn,

His lippes rounde, his colour was sang-
wyn,

A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-
meynd, 2170

And as a leoun he his loking caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.

His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.

Up-on his heed he wered of laurer
grene 2175

A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,

An egle tame, as eny lillie whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with him
there,

Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir
gere, 2180

Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles,
kinges,

Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.

Aboute this king ther ran on every
part 2185

Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and
some,

Ben on the Sondag to the citee come
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy
knight, 2190

Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degre,

He festeth hem, and dooth so greet
labour

To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes
wit 2195

Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.
The minstralcy, the service at the feste,

The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,

The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,
What ladies fairest been or best daun-
singe, 2201

Or which of hem can dauncen best and
singe,

Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perche above,

What houndes ligen on the floor
adoun: 2205

Of al this make I now no mencion;
But al theeffect, that thinketh me the
beste;

Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if
ye know leste.

The Sondag night, er day bigan to
springe,

When Palamon the larke herde singe,
Although it nere nat day by houres
two, 2211

Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
With holy herte, and with an heigh
corage

He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Un-to the blisful Citherca benigne, 2215

I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was,

And doun he kneleth, and with humble
chere

And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul
here. 2220

‘Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vul-
canus,

Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,

Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn
herte. 2226

Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Theffectes ne the torments of myn
helle;

Myn herte may myne harmes nat bi-
wreye;

I am so confus, that I can noight seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest
weel 2231

My thought, and seest what harmes that
I feel,

Considere al this, and rewe up-on my
sore,

As wisly as I shal for evermore,

Emforth my might, thy trewe servant
be, 2235

And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe nocht of armes for to yelpe,
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
2239

Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris of armes blowen up and down,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.

I recche nat, but it may bettre be, 2245
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes

Your vertu is so greet in hevене above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love. 2250

Thy temple wol I worshiþe evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere 2255

That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I nocht, whan I have lost my lyf,

Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.
This is theffect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.'

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon 2262
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I nocht as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook, 2265

And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;

And with glad herte he wente him hoom
ful sone. 2270

The thridde houre inequal that Palamoun

Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.

Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde, 2275

Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen shal; 2278
The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;
Ther lakked nocht to doon hir sacrifice.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general; 2285
And yet it were a game to heren al;
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:

But it is good a man ben at his large.
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stage of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere 2295
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevене and erthe and see is sene,

Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,

Goddessse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe 2300

Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,

As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,

That Attheon abouthte cruelly.

Chaste goddessse, wel wostow that I Desire to be a mayden al my lyf, 2305
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.

I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And nocht to be a wyf, and be with childe. 2310

Noght wol I knowe companye of man.
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hath swich love to me, 2314

And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;
And fro me turne away hir hertes so,

That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
 And al hir busy torment, and hir fyr 2320
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
 As sende me him that most desireth me.
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee, 2326
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us
 alle,
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel con-
 serve,
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee
 serve.' 2330

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;
 And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,
 As doon these wete bronδες in hir bren-
 ninge, 2338

And at the bronδες ende out-ran anon
 As it were bloody dropes many oon;
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to
 crye,
 For she ne wiste what it signified;
 But only for the fere thus hath she
 cryed,
 And weep, that it was pitee for to
 here. 2345

And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunter-
 esse,
 And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevi-
 nesse.

among the goddes hye it is affermed,
 and by eterne word write and con-
 fermed, 2350
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of
 tho

hat han for thee so muchel care and
 wo;

but un-to which of hem I may nat telle.
 Arwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.

The fyres which that on myn auter
 brenne 2355

shul thee declaren, er that thou go
 henne

thy aventure of love, as in this cas.'

And with that word, the arwes in the
 cas

Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe.
 And forth she wente, and made a van-
 issinge; 2360

For which this Emelye astoned was,
 And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'

And hoom she gooth anon the nexte
 weye. 2365

This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge
 this

Arcite un-to the temple walked is
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,
 With alle the rytes of his payen
 wyse. 2370

With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
 Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:
 'O stronge god, that in the regnes
 colde

Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,
 And hast in every regne and every
 lond 2375

Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
 And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,
 Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse.

If so be that my youthe may deserve,
 And that my might be worthy for to
 serve 2380

Thy godhede, that I may been oon of
 thyne,

Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my
 pyne.

For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
 In which thou whylom brendest for
 desyr,

Whan that thou usedest the grete
 beautee 2385

Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,
 And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,
 Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille
 Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his
 las,

And fond thee liggig by his wyf,
 allas! 2390

For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
 Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes
 smerte.

I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,
 And, as I trowe, with love offended
 most,

That ever was any lyves creature; 2395
 For she, that dooth me al this wo
 endure,
 Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.
 And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,
 I moot with strengthe winne hir in the
 place;
 And wel I woot, withouten help or grace
 Of thee, ne may my strengthe nocht
 availle. 2401
 Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my
 bataille,
 For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
 And do that I to-morwe have victorie.
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the
 glorie! 2406
 Thy soverein temple wol I most honouren
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes
 stronge,
 And in thy temple I wol my baner
 honge, 2410
 And alle the armes of my companye;
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long
 adoun, 2415
 That never yet ne felte offensioun
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
 And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live.
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes
 sore,
 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.' 2420
 The prayere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
 The ringes on the temple-dore that
 honge,
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
 The fyres brende up-on the auter
 brighte, 2425
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste 2430
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk
 ringe.
 And with that soun he herde a murmur-
 inge
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victo-
 torie':

For which he yaf to Mars honour and
 glorie.
 And thus with Ioye, and hope wel to
 fare, 2435
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.
 And right anon swich stryf ther is
 bigonne
 For thilke graunting, in the hevene
 above,
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love, 2440
 And Mars, the sterne god arnipotente,
 That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;
 Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
 That knew so manye of adventures olde,
 Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445
 That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
 As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet advantage;
 In elde is bothe wisdom and usage;
 Men may the olde at-renne, and nocht at-
 rede. 2449
 Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,
 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
 Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.
 'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,
 'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
 Hath more power than wot any man. 2455
 Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the
 throte;
 The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
 The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoun-
 ing: 2460
 I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
 Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
 The falling of the toures and of the walles
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 2465
 I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;
 And myne be the maladyes colde,
 The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
 My loking is the fader of pestilence.
 Now weep namore, I shal doon dili-
 gence 2470
 That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
 Shal have his lady, as thou hast him light.
 Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet
 natheles
 Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
 Al be ye nocht of o complexioun, 2475
 That causeth al day swich divisoun.
 I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;

Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust ful-
fille.'

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesses of
love, 2480

And telle yow, as pleyntly as I can,
The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

*Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars
quarta.*

Greet was the feste in Athenes that
day,

And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich ple-
saunce, 2485

That al that Monday Iusten they and
daunce,

and spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.

But by the cause that they shokde ryse
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,

Unto hir reste wente they at night. 2490
and on the morwe, whan that day gan
springe,

Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
ther w's in hostelryes al aboute;

and to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys. 2495

ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
so uncouth and so riche, and wrought so
weel

Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of
steel;

the sheeldes brighte, testers, and trap-
pures;

gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-
armures; 2500

lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres

nailling the speres, and helmes boke-
linge,

gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lac-
ing;

ther as need is, they weren no-thing
ydel; 2505

the fomy stedes on the golden brydel
gnawinge, and faste the armures also

With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro;
wemen on fote, and communes many oon

With shorte staves, thikke as they may
goon; 2510

types, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
that in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;

The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir ques-
tioun,

Divyninge of this Thebane knightes
two. 2515

Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal
be so;

Somme helden with him with the blake
berd,

Somme with the balled, somme with the
thikke-herd;

Somme sayde, he loked grim and he
wolde fighte;

He hath a sparth of twenty pound of
wighte. 2520

Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep
awaked

With minstralcye and noyse that was
makid,

Held yet the chambre of his paleys
riche, 2525

Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-
liche

Honoured, were into the paleys fet.

Duk Theseus was at a window set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.

The peple preesseth thider-ward ful
sone 2530

Him for to seen, and doon heigh rever-
ence,

And eek to herkne his hest and his sen-
tence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;

And whan he saugh the peple of noyse
al stille, 2535

Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
'The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun

Considered, that it were destruccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse

Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;
Wherefore, to shapen that they shul not
dye, 2541

He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,

No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;

Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt
bytinge, 2545

No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
Ne no man shall un-to his felawe ryde

But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde
 spere;
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to
 were. 2550
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
 And noght slayn, but be broght un-to
 the stake
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
 But thider he shal by force, and ther
 abyde. 2554
 And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
 On either syde, or elles slee his make.
 No lenger shall the turneyinge laste.
 God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on
 faste.
 With long swerd and with maces fight
 your fille.
 Goth now your wey; this is the lordes
 wille.' 2560
 The voys of peple touchede the
 hevене,
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
 'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'
 Up goon the trompes and the melo-
 dye. 2565
 And to the listes rit the companye
 By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee
 large,
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with
 sarge.
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
 Thise two Thebanes up-on either
 syde; 2570
 And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
 And after that another companye
 Of oon and other, after hir degree.
 And thus they passen thurgh-out the
 citee, 2574
 And to the listes come they by tyme.
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryde,
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
 Ipolita the quene and Emelye,
 And other ladies in degrees aboute.
 Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.
 And west-ward, thurgh the gates under
 Marte, 2581
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
 With baner reed is entred right anon;
 And in that selve moment Palamon
 Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and
 face. 2586

In al the world, to seken up and doun,
 So even with-outen variacioun,
 Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
 For ther nas noon so wys that coude
 seye, 2590
 That any hadde of other avauntage
 Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
 So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
 And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
 Whan that hir names rad were ever-
 ichoon, 2595
 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
 Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was
 loude:
 'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes
 proude!'
 The heraudes lefte hir priking up and
 doun;
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;
 Ther is namore to seyn, but west and
 est 2601
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;
 In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
 Ther seen men who can Iuste, and who
 can ryde;
 Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes
 thikke; 2605
 He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the
 prikke.
 Up springen speres twenty foot on
 highte;
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver
 brighte.
 The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes
 rede. 2610
 With mighty maces the bones they to-
 breste.
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng
 gan threste.
 Ther stomben stedes stronge, and doun
 goth al.
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.
 He foyneth on his feet with his tron-
 choun, 2615
 And he him hurtleth with his hors
 adoun.
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen
 y-take,
 Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the
 stake,
 As forward was, right ther he moste
 abyde;

Another lad is on that other syde. 2620
 And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to
 reste,
 Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem
 leste.
 Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
 Egidre y-met, and wroght his felawe
 wo;
 Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgo-
 pheye, 2626
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is
 lyte,
 so cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
 For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun:
 He in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun, 2630
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 He of his praye desireth so the blood,
 As Palamoun to sleen his fo Arcite.
 The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte;
 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes
 rede. 2635
 Som tyme an ende ther is of every
 dede;
 For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
 The stronge king Emetreus gan hente
 this Palamoun, as he fought with Arcite,
 And made his swerd depe in his flesh to
 byte; 2640
 And by the force of twenty is he take
 Jnyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.
 And in the rescous of this Palamoun
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
 And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
 is born out of his sadel a swerdes
 lengthe, 2646
 so hitte him Palamoun er he were take;
 but al for noght, he was broght to the
 stake.
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe
 naught;
 He moste abyde, whan that he was
 caught 2650
 by force, and eek by composicioun.
 Who sorweth now but woful Pala-
 moun,
 That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
 And whan that Theseus had seyn this
 sighte, 2654
 In-to the folk that foghten thus echoon
 He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
 wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.
 Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,

That by his fortune hath hir faire y-
 wonne.'
 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
 For Ioye of this, so loude and heigh
 with-alle, 2661
 It semed that the listes sholde falle.
 What can now faire Venus doon
 above?
 What seith she now? what dooth this
 quene of love?
 But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
 Til that hir teres in the listes fille; 2666
 She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'
 Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy
 pees.
 Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al
 his bone,
 And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed
 sone.' 2670
 The trompes, with the loude minstral-
 cye,
 The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and
 crye,
 Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.
 But herkneth me, and stinteth now a
 lyte,
 Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675
 This fierse Arcite hath of his helin
 y-don,
 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
 He priketh endelong the large place,
 Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
 And she agayn him caste a freendlich
 yē, 2680
 (For women, as to speken in comune,
 They folwen al the favour of fortune,)
 And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
 Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
 From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
 And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
 And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
 He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
 That in the place he lay as he were
 deed, 2690
 His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
 So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
 Anon he was y-born out of the place
 With herte soor, to Theseus paleys. 2695
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
 And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,
 For he was yet in memorie and alyve,

And alway crying after Emelye. 2699

Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde nocht disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat
dye; 2705

He shal ben heled of his maladye.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-
boon. 2710

To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden
charmes;

Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes
have. 2714

For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a lustes or a tourneyinge; 2720

For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O persone allone, with-uten mo, 2725
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek
knaves,

It nas aretted him no vileinye, 2729
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheser brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree, 2735
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a Iournee largely.
And hoom wente every man the righte
way.

Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good
day!' 2740

Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the
sore

Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any leche-
craft, 2745

Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his help-
inge.

The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu eleped natural 2750
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.

The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.

Him gayneth neither, for to gete his
lyf, 2755

Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.

And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to
chirche! 2760

This al and som, that Arcite mot dye,
For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

Naught may the woful spirit in myn
herte 2765

Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most;

But I biquethe the service of my gost
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure. 2770

Allas, the wo! alas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!

Allas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!

Allas, myn hertes quene! alas, myn
wyf! 2775

Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to
have?

Now with his love, now in his colde
grave

Allone, with-uten any companye.
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye! 2780

And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneht what I
seye.

I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my Ielousye. 2785

And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,
To speken of a servant proprely,

With alle circumstaunces trewely,
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and
 knightehede,
 Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh
 kinrede, 2790
 Freedom, and al that longeth to that art,
 So Iupiter have of my soule part,
 As in this world right now ne knowe I
 non
 So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his
 lyf. 2795
 And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
 Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.
 And with that word his speche faille gan,
 For from his feet up to his brest was come
 The cold of deeth, that hadde him over-
 come. 2800
 And yet more-over, in his armes two
 The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
 Only the intellect, with-ouen more,
 That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
 Gan failen, when the herte felte
 deeth, 2805
 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breath.
 But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
 His laste wor was, 'mercy, Emelye!'
 His spirit chaunged hous, and wente
 ther, 2809
 As I can never, I can nat tellen wher.
 Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;
 Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
 Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
 Of hem, though that they wryten wher
 they dwelle. 2814
 Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;
 Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.
 Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
 And Theseus his suster took anon
 Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps
 away. 2819
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
 To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and
 morwe?
 For in swich cas wommen have swich
 sorwe,
 Whan that hir housbonds been from hem
 ago,
 That for the more part they sorwen so,
 Or elles fallen in swich maladye, 2825
 That at the laste certainly they dye.
 Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
 Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,

In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
 For him ther wepeth bothe child and
 man; 2830
 So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
 Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-
 slayn,
 To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,
 Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.
 'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen
 crye, 2835
 'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'
 No man mighte gladen Theseus,
 Savige his olde fader Egeus,
 That knew this worldes transmucioun,
 As he had seyn it chaungen up and
 doun, 2840
 Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
 And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.
 'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod
 he,
 'That he ne livede in erthe in som
 degree,
 Right so ther livede never man,' he
 seyde, 2845
 'In al this world, that som tyme he ne
 deyde.
 This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
 And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and
 fro;
 Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'
 And over al this yet seyde he muchel
 more 2850
 To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
 The peple, that they sholde hem recon-
 forte.
 Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
 Caste now wher that the sepulture
 Of good Arcite may best y-maked be, 2855
 And eek most honourable in his degree.
 And at the laste he took conclusioun,
 That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
 That in that selve grove, swote and
 grene, 2860
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
 His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
 He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice
 Funeral he mighte al accomplice;
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and
 hewe 2865
 The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;
 His officers with swifte feet they renne

And ryde anon at his comaundement.
 And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870
 After a bere, and it al over-spradde
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he
 hadde.

And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;
 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;
 Eek on his heed a crowne of laurer
 grene, 2875
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and
 kene.

He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
 Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.
 And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
 Whan it was day, he broghte him to the
 halle, 2880

That roreth of the crying and the soun.
 Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
 With flotery berd, and ruggy assy heres,
 In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
 And, passing othere of weping, Em-
 elye, 2885
 The rewfulleste of al the companye.

In as muche as the service sholde be
 The more noble and riche in his degree,
 Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes
 bringe, 2889
 That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,
 And covered with the armes of daun
 Arcite.

Up-on these stedes, that weren grete and
 whyte,
 Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his
 sheeld,

Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
 The thridde bar with him his bowe
 Turkeys, 2895
 Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the
 harneys;

And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
 Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
 The nobleste of the Grekes that ther
 were

Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere, 2900
 With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
 Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder
 hye

Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
 Up-on the right hond wente old
 Egeus, 2905

And on that other syde duk Theseus,
 With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,

Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;
 Eek Palamoun, with ful greet companye;
 And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910
 With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the
 gyse,

To do thoffice of funeral servyse.
 Heigh labour, and ful greet apparail-
 linge

Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
 That with his grene top the heven
 raughte, 2915
 And twenty fadme of brede the armes
 straughte;

This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
 Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a
 lode.

But how the fyr was makid up on heichte,
 And eek the names how the trees
 highte, 2920

As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, pop-
 ler,

Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn,
 lind, laurer,

Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel-
 tree,

How they weren feld, shal nat be told for
 me;

Ne how the goddes ronnen up and
 down, 2925

Disherited of hir habitacioun,
 In which they woneden in reste and pees,
 Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;

Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
 Fledden for fere, whan the wode was
 falle; 2930

Ne how the ground agast was of the
 light,

That was nat wont to seen the sonne
 bright;

Ne how the fyr was couched first with
 stree,

And than with drye stokkes cloven a
 three, 2934

And than with grene wode and spycerye,
 And than with cloth of gold and with
 perrye,

And gerlandes hanging with ful many a
 flour,

The mirre, thencens, with al so greet
 odour;

Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
 Ne what richesse aboute his body is; 2940
 Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,

Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
 Ne how she swowned whan men made
 the fyr,
 Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
 Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho
 caste, 2945
 Whan that the fyr was greet and brente
 faste;
 Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir
 spere,
 And of hir vestiments, whiche that they
 were,
 And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and
 blood, 2949
 Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
 Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
 Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
 Up-on the left hand, with a loud shout-
 inge,
 And thryës with hir speres clateringe;
 And thryës how the ladies gonne
 crye; 2955
 Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
 Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
 Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
 Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
 The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;
 Who wrastleth best naked, with oille
 enoynt, 2961
 Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.
 I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
 Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is
 doon;
 But shortly to the poynt than wol I
 wende, 2965
 And maken of my longe tale an ende.
 By processe and by lengthe of certeyn
 yeres
 Al stinted is the moorning and the teres
 Of Grekes, by oon general assent.
 Than semed me ther was a parlement 2970
 At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and
 cas;
 Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
 To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
 And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
 For which this noble Theseus anon 2975
 Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
 Unwist of him what was the cause and
 why;
 But in his blake clothes sorwefully
 He cam at his comaundement in hye.
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye. 2980

Whan they were set, and hust was al the
 place,
 And Theseus abiden hadde a space
 Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
 His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
 And with a sad visage he syked stille,
 And after that right thus he seyde his
 wille. 2986
 'The firste moevere of the cause
 above,
 Whan he first made the faire cheyne of
 love,
 Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his
 entente;
 Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he
 mente; 2990
 For with that faire cheyne of love he
 bond
 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat
 flee;
 That same prince and that moevere,
 quod he,
 'Hath stablised, in this wrecched world
 adoun, 2995
 Certeyne dayes and duracioun
 To al that is engended in this place,
 Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
 Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, 3000
 For it is preved by experience,
 But that me list declaren my sentence.
 Than may men by this ordre wel dis-
 cerne,
 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool, 3005
 That every part deryveth from his hool.
 For nature hath nat take his beginning
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing,
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
 Descending so, til it be corruptable. 3010
 And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
 That speses of thinges and progressiouns
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lye: 3015
 This maistow understonde and seen at
 yë.
 'Lo the ook, that hath so long a nor-
 isshinge
 From tyme that it first biginneth springe,
 And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree. 3020

'Considereth eek, how that the harde
 stoon
 Under oon feet, on which we trede and
 goon,
 Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
 The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
 The grete tounes see we wane and
 wende. 3025
 Than may ye see that al this thing hath
 ende.
 'Of man and womman seen we wel
 also,
 That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
 This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
 He moot ben deed, the king as shal a
 page; 3030
 Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
 Som in the large feeld, as men may see;
 Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke
 weye.
 Thanne may I seyn that al this thing
 moot deye.
 What maketh this but Iupiter the king?
 The which is prunce and cause of alle
 thing, 3036
 Converting al un-to his propre welle,
 From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.
 And here-agayns no creature on lyve
 Of no degree availleth for to stryve. 3040
 'Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh
 me,
 To maken vertu of necessitee,
 And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
 And namely that to us alle is due.
 And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth
 folye, 3045
 And rebel is to him that al may gye.
 And certainly a man hath most honour
 To dyen in his excellence and flour,
 Whan he is siker of his gode name;
 Than hath he doon his freend, ne him,
 no shame. 3050
 And gladder oghte his freend ben of his
 deeth,
 Whan with honour up-yolden is his
 breeth,
 Than whan his name apalled is for age;
 For al forgeten is his vasselage.
 Than is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055
 To dyen whan that he is best of name.
 The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
 Why grucchen we? why have we hevi-
 nesse,

That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
 Departed is, with duetee and honour, 3060
 Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
 Why grucchen heer his cosin and his
 wyf
 Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
 Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never
 a deel,
 That bothe his soule and eek hem-self
 offende, 3065
 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat
 amende.
 'What may I conclude of this longe
 serie,
 But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,
 And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?
 And, er that we departen from this
 place, 3070
 I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
 O parfyt Ioye, lasting ever-mo;
 And loketh now, wher most sorwe is
 her-inne,
 Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.
 'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle
 assent, 3075
 With al thavys heer of my parlment,
 That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
 That serveth yow with wille, herte, and
 might,
 And ever hath doon, sin that ye first
 him knewe,
 That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him
 rewe, 3080
 And taken him for housbonde and for
 lord:
 Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
 Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
 He is a kinges brother sone, pardee; 3084
 And, though he were a povre bacheler,
 Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
 And had for yow so greet adversitee,
 It moste been considered, leveth me;
 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'
 Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful
 right; 3090
 'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
 To make yow assente to this thing.
 Com neer, and tak your lady by the
 hond.'
 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
 That highte matrimoine or mariage, 3095
 By al the counseil and the baronage.
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye

Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.
 And God, that al this wyde world hath
 wrought,
 Sende him his love, that hathe it dere
 a-boght. 3100
 For now is Palamon in alle wele,
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in
 hele;

And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
 That never was ther no word hem
 bitwene 3105
 Of Ielousye, or any other tene.
 Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
 And God save al this faire companye!—
 Amen.

Here is ended the Knightes Tale.

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folowen the wordes bitwene the Host
 and the Millere.*

WHAN that the Knight had thus his tale
 y-told,
 In al the route nas ther yong ne old 3110
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
 And worthy for to drawn to memorie;
 And namely the gentils everichoon.
 Our Hoste lough and swear, 'so moot I
 goon,
 This gooth aright; unboked is the
 male; 3115
 Lat see now who shal telle another tale:
 For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.
 Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye
 conne,
 Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes
 tale.'
 The Miller, that for-dronken was al
 pale, 3120
 So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,
 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
 Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,
 But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
 And swear by armes and by blood and
 bones, 3125
 'I can a noble tale for the nones,
 With which I wol now quyte the Knightes
 tale.'
 Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke
 of ale,
 And seyde: 'abyd, Robin, my leve
 brother,
 Som better man shal telle us first another:
 Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.' 3131
 'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol
 nat I;

For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'
 Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel
 wey!
 Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.' 3135
 'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle
 and some!
 But first I make a protestacioun
 That I am dronke, I knowe it by my
 soun;
 And therefore, if that I misspeke or
 seye,
 Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow
 preye; 3140
 For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
 Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,
 How that a clerk hath set the wrightes
 cappe.'
 The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint
 thy clappe,
 Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye. 3145
 It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
 To apeiren any man, or him diffame,
 And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame.
 Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges
 seyn.'
 This dronken Miller spak ful sone
 ageyn, 3150
 And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,
 Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
 But I sey nat therfore that thou art
 oon;
 Ther been ful gode wyves many oon,
 And ever a thousand gode ayeins oon
 badde, 3155
 That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou
 madde.
 Why artow angry with my tale now?
 I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou,

Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
 Taken up-on me more than y-nogh, 3160
 As demen of my-self that I were oon;
 I wol beleve wel that I am noon.
 An housbond shal nat been inquisitif
 Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.
 So he may finde goddes foyson there,
 Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.

What sholde I more seyn, but this
 Millere 3167
 He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
 But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;
 Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here.
 And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,
 For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
 Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce

Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
 Or elles falsen som of my matere. 3175
 And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,
 Turne over the leef, and chese another
 tale;

For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and
 smale,

Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
 And eek moralitee and holinesse; 3180
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.

The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
 So was the Reve, and othere many mo,
 And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.

Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame;
 And eek men shal nat make earnest of
 game. 3186

Here endeth the prologe.

THE MILLERES TALE.

Here biginneth the Millere his tale.

WHYLOM ther was dwellinge at Oxenford
 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,
 And of his craft he was a Carpenter.
 With him ther was dwellinge a povre
 scoler, 3190

Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
 And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns
 To demen by interrogaciouns,
 If that men axed him in certein houres,
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or
 elles shoures, 3196

Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle
 Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem
 alle.

This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;
 Of derne love he coude and of solas; 3200
 And ther-to he was sleigh and ful privee,
 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
 Allone, with-ouen any companye,
 Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote; 3205
 And he him-self as swete as is the rote
 Of licorys, or any cetewale.

His Almageste and bokes grete and
 smale,

His astrelabie, longinge for his art,
 His augrim-stones layen faire a-part 3210

On shelves couched at his beddes heed:
 His presse y-covered with a falding reed.
 And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,
 On which he made a nightes melodye
 So swetely, that al the chambre rong;
 And *Angelus ad virginem* he song; 3216
 And after that he song the kinges note;
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente
 After his freendes finding and his rente.

This Carpenter had wedded newe a
 wyf 3221

Which that he lovede more than his lyf;
 Of eightetene yeer she was of age.

Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in
 cage,

For she was wilde and yong, and he was
 old, 3225

And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold.
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was
 rude,

That bad man sholde wedde his simili-
 tude.

Men sholde wedden after hir estaat, 3229
 For youthe and elde is often at debaat.

But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
 He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-
 with-al

As any wesele hir body gent and smal.

A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235
 A barnclooth eek as whyt as morne
 milk

Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
 Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al
 bifore

And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,
 Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-
 oute. 3240

The tapes of hir whyte voluper
 Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
 Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hyc:

And sikerly she hadde a likerous yē.
 Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes
 two, 3245

And tho were bent, and blake as any
 sloo.

She was ful more blisful on to see
 Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;
 And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether
 Tasseld with silk, and perled with la-
 toutn. 3251

In al this world, to seken up and down,
 There nis no man so wys, that coude
 thenche

So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
 Ful brighter was the shyning of hir
 hewe 3255

Than in the tour the noble y-forged
 newe.

But of hir song, it was as loude and
 yerne

As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.
 Ther-to she coude skippe and make
 game,

As any kide or calf folwinge his dame.
 Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the
 meeth, 3261

Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
 Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler,
 As brood as is the bos of a bocler. 3266
 Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hyc;

She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye
 For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270

Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,
 That on a day this hende Nicholas
 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and
 pleye,

Whyt that hir housbond was at Osencye,

As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful
 queynte; 3275

And prively he caughte hir by the
 queynte,

And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my
 wille,

For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille.'
 And heeld hir harde by the haunche-
 bones,

And seyde, 'lemman, love me al at-ones,
 Or I wol dyen, also god me save!' 3281
 And she sprong as a colt doth in the
 trave,

And with hir heed she wryed faste away,
 And seyde, 'I wol nat kisse thee, by my
 fey, 3284

Why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas,
 Or I wol crye out "harrow" and "allas."
 Do wey your handes for your curteisye!'

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
 And spak so faire, and profred hir so
 faste,

That she hir love him graunted atte
 laste, 3290
 And swor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of
 Kent,

That she wol been at his comandement,
 Whan that she may hir leysur wel espye.

'Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,
 That but ye wayte wel and been privee,
 I woot right wel I nam but deed,' quod
 she. 3296

'Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.'
 'Nay ther-of care thee noght,' quod
 Nicholas,

'A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,
 But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.' 3300
 And thus they been acorded and y-sworn
 To wayte a tyme, as I have told bifore.

Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeed,
 And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,
 He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye,
 And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye.

Than fil it thus, that to the parish-
 chirche, 3307

Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,
 This gode wyf wente on an haliday;
 Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,
 So was it wasshen whan she leet hir
 werk. 3311

Now was ther of that chirche a parish-
 clerke,

The which that was y-cleped Absolon.

Crul was his heer, and as the gold it
shoon,

And strouted as a fanne large and
brode; 3315

Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode.
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as
goos;

With Powles window corven on his
shoos,

In hoses rede he wente fetisly.

Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320
Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;

Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes
set.

And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys

As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.

A mery child he was, so god me save,
Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and
shave, 3326

And make a chartre of lond or acquit-
aunce.

In twenty manere coude he trippe and
daunce

After the scole of Oxenforde tho, 3329
And with his legges casten to and fro,

And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quin-
ible;

And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.

In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas, 3335
Ther any gaylard tappestere was.

But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squay-
mous

Of farting, and of speche daungerous.

This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,
Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340
Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
And namely on this carpenteres wyf.

To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lvf,
She was so propre and swete and like-
rous. 3345

I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous,
And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.

This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,
Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,
That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe;
For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.
The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte
shoon, 3352

And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,
For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.

And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous,
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous 3356

A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;

And dressed him up by a shot-windowe

That was up-on the carpenteres wal.

He singeth in his vois gentil and smal,

'Now, dere lady, if thy wille be, 3361
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,'

Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.

This carpenter awook, and herde him
singe,

And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde
anon, 3365

'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon
That chaunteth thus under our boures
wal?'

And she answerde hir housbond ther-
with-al,

'Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.'
This passeth forth; what wol ye bet
than wel? 3370

Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon

So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.

He waketh al the night and al the day;

He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made
him gay;

He woweth hir by menes and brocage,

And swoor he wolde been hir owne
page; 3376

He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;

He sente hir piment, meeth, and spyced
ale,

And wafres, pyping hote out of the
glede;

And for she was of toune, he profred
mede. 3380

For som folk wol ben wonnen for rich-
esse,

And som for strokes, and som for gentill-
esse.

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and
maistrye,

He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.

But what availleth him as in this cas?

She loveth so this hende Nicholas, 3386
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes
horn;

He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;

And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,

And al his earnest turneth til a Iape. 3390
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,

Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nye slye
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.'

For though that Absolon be wood or
wrooth, 3394

By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte,
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte.

Now here thee wel, thou hende Nich-
olas!

For Absolon may waille and singe
'allas.'

And so bifel it on a Saterdag,
This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400

And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusioun,

That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle
This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle; 3405

And if so be the game wente aright,
She sholde slepen in his arm al night,

For this was his desyr and hir also.
And right anon, with-ouen wordes mo,

This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre
carie 3410

Bothe mete and drinke for a day or
tweye,

And to hir housbonde bad hir for to
seye,

If that he axed after Nicholas,
She sholde seye she niste where he was,

Of al that day she saugh him nat with
yë; 3415

She trowed that he was in maladye,
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him
calle;

He nolde answere, for no-thing that
michte falle.

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,

And eet and sleep, or dide what him
leste, 3421

Til Sondag, that the sonne gooth to
reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet mer-
veyle

Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him
eyle,

And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas,
It standeth nat aright with Nicholas. 3426

God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;

I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him
wirche. 3430

Go up,' quod he un-to his knave
anoon,

'Clepe at his dore, or knockke with a
stoon,

Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.'

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he
stood, 3435

He cryde and knockked as that he were
wood:—

'What! how! what do ye, maister Nich-
olay?

How may ye slepen al the longe day?'
But al for nocht, he herde nat a word;

An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to
crepe; 3441

And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
And at the laste he hadde of him a
sighte.

This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,
As he had kyked on the newe mone. 3445

Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister
sone

In what array he saugh this ilke man.
This carpenter to bleesen him bigan,

And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!
A man woot litel what him shal bityde.

This man is falle, with his astromye, 3451
In som woodnesse or in som agonye;

I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!
Men sholde nat knowe of goddes prive-
tee.

Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man, 3455
That nocht but oonly his bileve can!

So ferde another clerk with astromye;
He walked in the feeldes for to pry

Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde
bifalle,

Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle; 3460
He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint
Thomas,

Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.
He shal be rated of his studying,

If that I may, by Jesus, hevenc king!
Get me a staf, that I may underspore,

Whyl that thou, Robin, hevest up the
dore. 3466

He shal out of his studying, as I
gesse'—

And to the chambre-dore he gan him
dresse.

His knave was a strong carl for the
nones,

And by the haspe he haf it up atones;

In-to the floor the dore fil anon. 3471
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
 And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.
 This carpenter wende he were in de-
 speir,
 And hente him by the sholdres might-
 ily, 3475
 And shook him harde, and cryde spit-
 ously,
 'What! Nicholay! what, how! what loke
 adoun!
 Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;
 I crouche thee from elves and fro
 wightes!'
 Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-
 righites 3480
 On foure halves of the hous aboute,
 And on the threshold of the dore with-
 oute: —
 'Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,
 Blesse this hous from every wikked
 wight,
 For nightes verye, the white *pater-nos-
 ter!* 3485
 Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?'
 And atte laste this hende Nicholas
 Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, 'allas!
 Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?'
 This carpenter answerde, 'what seys-
 tow? 3490
 What! thenk on god, as we don, men
 that swinke.'
 This Nicholas answerde, 'fecche me
 drinke;
 And after wol I speke in privetee
 Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and
 thee;
 I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.'
 This carpenter goth down, and comth
 ageyn, 3496
 And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;
 And whan that ech of hem had dronke
 his part,
 This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
 And down the carpenter by him he
 sette 3500
 He seyde, 'Iohn, myn hoste lief and
 dere,
 Thou shalt up-on thy trouthe swere me
 here,
 That to no wight thou shalt this conseil
 wreye;
 For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,

And if thou telle it man, thou art for-
 lore; 3505
 For this vengauce thou shalt han ther-
 fore,
 That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be
 wood!'
 'Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy
 blood!'
 Quod tho this sely man, 'I nam no
 labbe,
 Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to
 gabbe. 3510
 Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never
 telle
 To child ne wyf, by him that harwed
 helle!'
 'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol
 nat lye;
 I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
 As I have loked in the mone bright,
 That now, a Monday next, at quarter-
 night, 3516
 Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and
 wood,
 That half so greet was never Noës flood.
 This world,' he seyde, 'in lasse than in
 an hour
 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the
 shour; 3520
 Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese
 hir lyf.'
 This carpenter answerde, 'allas, my
 wyf!
 And shal she drenche? allas! myn
 Alisoun!'
 For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
 And seyde, 'is ther no remedie in this
 cas?' 3525
 'Why, yis, for gode,' quod hende Nich-
 olas,
 'If thou wolt werken after lore and
 reed;
 Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene
 heed.
 For thus seith Salomon, that was ful
 trewe,
 "Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat
 rewe." 3530
 And if thou werken wolt by good con-
 seil,
 I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,
 Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me.
 Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,

Whan that our lord had warned him
 biforn 3535
 That al the world with water sholde be
 lorn?'
 'Yis,' quod this carpenter, 'ful yore
 ago.'
 'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas,
 'also
 The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,
 Er that he mighte gete his wyf to
 shipe? 3540
 Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
 At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres
 blake,
 That she hadde had a ship hir-self
 allone.
 And ther-fore, wostou what is best to
 done?
 This asketh haste, and of an hastif
 thing 3545
 Men may nat preche or maken taryng.
 Anon go gete us faste in-to this in
 A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,
 For ech of us, but loke that they be
 large,
 In whiche we mowe swimme as in a
 barge, 3550
 And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant
 But for a day; fy on the remenant!
 The water chal aslake and goon away
 Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day.
 But Robin may nat wite of this, thy
 knave, 3555
 Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save;
 Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
 I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.
 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
 To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde.
 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,
 Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-
 aboute. 3562
 But whan thou hast, for hir and thee
 and me,
 Y-geeten us thise kneding-tubbes three,
 Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful
 hye, 3565
 That no man of our purveyaunce spye.
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have
 seyde,
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,
 And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
 When that the water comth, that we
 may go, 3570

And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the
 gable,
 Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,
 That we may frely passen forth our way
 Whan that the grete shour is goon
 away —
 Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I un-
 dertake, 3575
 As doth the whyte doke after hir drake.
 Than wol I clepe, "how! Alison! how!
 John!
 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."
 And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister
 Nicholay!
 Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is
 day." 3580
 And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
 Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.
 But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
 Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
 That we ben entred in-to shippes
 bord, 3585
 That noon of us ne speke nat a word,
 Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his
 preyere;
 For it is goddes owne heste dere.
 Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-
 twinne,
 For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne
 No more in looking than ther shal in
 dede; 3591
 This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee
 spede!
 Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle
 aslepe,
 In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,
 And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace.
 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger
 space 3596
 To make of this no lenger sermoning.
 Men seyn thus, "send the wyse, and sey
 no-thing;"
 Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat
 teche;
 Go, save our lyf, and that I thee bi-
 seche.' 3600
 This sely carpenter goth forth his
 wey.
 Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weyl-
 away,'
 And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;
 And she was war, and knew it bet than
 he.

What al this queynte cast was for to
seye. 3605

But nathelees she ferde as she wolde
deye,

And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey
anon,

Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;

Go, dere spouse, and help to save our
lyf.' 3610

Lo! which a greet thyng is affecciou!

Men may dye of imaginacioun,

So depe may impressioun be take.

This sely carpenter biginneth quake;

Him thinketh verrailly that he may
see 3616

Noës flood come walwing as the see

To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.

He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,

He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.

He gooth and geteth him a knedling-
trogh, 3620

And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,

And prively he sente hem to his in,

And heng hem in the roof in privetee.

His owne hand he made laddres three,

To climben by the ronges and the
stalkes 3625

Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes,

And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and
tubbe,

With breed and chese, and good ale in a
tubbe,

Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.

But er that he had maad al this array,

He sente his knave, and eek his wenche
also, 3631

Up-on his nede to London for to go.

And on the Monday, whan it drow to
night,

He shette his dore with-oute candel-
light,

And dressed al thing as it sholde
be. 3635

And shortly, up they clomben alle three;

They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.

'Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!' seyde
Nicholay,

And 'clom,' quod John, and 'clom,' seyde
Alisoun.

This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640

And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,

Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for wery bisnesse,

Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,

Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more; 3645

For travail of his goost he groneth sore,

And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.

Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,

And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;

With-uten wordes mo, they goon to
bedde 3650

Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.

Ther was the revel and the melodye;

And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,

In bisnesse of mirthe and of solas,

Til that the belle of laudes gan to
ringe, 3655

And freres in the chauncel gonne singe.

This parish-clerk, this amorous Ab-
solon,

That is for love alway so wo bigon,

Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye

With companye, him to disporte and
pleye, 3660

And axed up-on cas a cloisterer

Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter;

And he drough him a-part out of the
chirche,

And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat
wirche

Sin Saterdag; I trow that he be
went 3665

For timber, ther our abbot hath him
sent;

For he is wont for timber for to go,

And dwellen at the grange a day or two;

Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;

Wher that he be, I can nat sothly
seyn.' 3670

This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,

And thoughte, 'now is tyme wake al
night;

For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe

Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.

So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes
crowe, 3675

Ful prively knocken at his windowe

That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.

To Alison now wol I tellen al

My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse

That at the leste wey I shal hir
kisse. 3680

Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,

My mouth hath icched al this longe day;

That is a signe of kissing atte leste.

Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.
 Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or
 tweye, 3685
 And al the night than wol I wake and
 pleye.'

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe,
 anon

Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,
 And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.
 But first he cheweth greyn and
 lycorys, 3690
 To smellen swete, er he had kembd his
 heer.

Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,
 For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.
 He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
 And stille he stant under the shot-
 windowe; 3695

Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe;
 And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun —
 'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?
 My faire brid, my swete cinamome,
 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to
 me! 3700

Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,
 That for your love I swete ther I go.
 No wonder is thogh that I swelte and
 swete;

I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.
 Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-
 longinge, 3705
 That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge;
 I may nat ete na more than a mayde.'

'Go fro the window, Iakke fool,' she
 sayde,
 'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ba
 me,"

I love another, and elles I were to
 blame, 3710

Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!
 Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
 And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!'

'Allas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylaway!
 That trewe love was ever so yvel
 bisset! 3715

Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet,
 For Iesus love and for the love of me.'

'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?'

quod she.
 'Ye, certes, lemman,' quod this
 Absolon.

'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she,
 'I come anon; 3720

And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille,
 'Now hust, and thou shalt laughen al thy
 fille.'

This Absolon doun sette him on his
 knees,

And seyde, 'I am a lord at alle degrees;
 For after this I hope ther cometh
 more! 3725

Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thy
 ore!'

The window she undoth, and that in
 haste,

'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed
 thee faste,

Lest that our neighebores thee espye.'

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful
 drye; 3730

Derk was the night as pich, or as the
 cole,

And at the window out she putte hir hole,
 And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,

But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
 Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was
 amis,

For wel he wiste a womman hath no
 berd;

He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,
 And seyde, 'fy! allas! what have I do?'

'Tehee!' quod she, and clapte the
 window to; 3740

And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

'A berd, a berd!' quod hende
 Nicholas,

'By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and
 weel!'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,
 And on his lippe he gan for anger
 byte; 3745

And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee
 quyte!'

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now
 his lippes

With dust, with sond, with straw, with
 clooth, with chippes,

But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!
 My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas, 3750

But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod
 he,

'Of this despyt awroken for to be!
 Ailas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde
 y-bleynt!'

His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;

For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir
ers, 3755

Of paramours he sette nat a kers,
For he was heled of his maladye;
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,
And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.
A softe paas he wente over the
strete 3760

Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,
That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;
He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.

This Absolon knokketh al esily,
And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that
anon.' 3765

'What, who artow?' 'It am I,
Absolon.'

'What Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite!*
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it
woot,

Hath broght yow thus up-on the viri-
toot; 3770

By sēynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.'

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;
He hadde more tow on his distaf

Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend
so dere, 3775

That hote culter in the chimenee here,
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.'

Gerveys answerde, 'certes, were it
gold,

Or in a poke nobles alle untold, 3780
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe
smith;

Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-
with?'

'Ther-of,' quod Absolon, 'be as be
may;

I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day'—
And caughte the culter by the colde
stele. 3785

Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.
He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-
with-al

Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.

This Alison answerde, 'Who is ther
That knokketh so? I warante it a
theef.' 3791

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my
swete leef,

I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a
ring; 3794

My moder yaf it me, so god me save,
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave;
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!'

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the
Iape,

He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.
And up the windowe dide he hastily 3801

And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttoke, to the haunche-bon;
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Abso-
lon,

'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou
art.' 3805

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,
As grect as it had been a thonder-dent,
That with the strook he was almost
y-blent;

And he was redy with his iren hoot,
And Nicholas amide the ers he smoot.

Of gooth the skin an hande-brede
aboute, 3811

The hote culter brende so his toute,
And for the smert he wende for to dye.

As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye—
'Help! water! water! help, for goddes
herte!' 3815

This carpenter out of his slomber
sterte,

And herde oon cryen 'water' as he were
wood,

And thoghte, 'Allas! now comth Now-
elis flood!'

He sit him up with-outhe wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-
two, 3820

And down goth al; he fond neither to
selle,

Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle
Upon the floor; and ther aswowne he
lay.

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the
strete. 3825

The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and
wan;

For with the fal he brosten hadde his
arm;

But stonde he moste un-to his owne
harm. 3830
For whan he spak, he was anon bore
doun
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood,
He was agast so of ' Nowel's flood '
Thugh fantasye, that of his vanitee 3835
He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes
three,
And hadde hem hanged in the roof
above;
And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,
To sitten in the roof, *par compaignye*. 3839
The folk gan laughan at his fantasye;
In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,

And turned al his harm un-to a Iape.
For what so that this carpenter answerde,
It was for noight, no man his reson herde;
With othes grete he was so sworn adoun,
That he was holden wood in al the toun;
For every clerk anon-right heeld with
other. 3847
They seyde, ' the man is wood, my leve
brother; '
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.
Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf,
For al his keping and his Ialousye ;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë;
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.
' This tale is doon, and god save al the
route ! 3854

Here endeth the Millere his tale.

THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE.

The prologe of the Reves tale.

WHAN folk had laughen at this nyce cas
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas, 3856
Diverse folk diversely they seyde;
But, for the more part, they loughe and
pleyde,
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him
greve,
But it were only Osewold the Reve, 3860
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.
A litel ire is in his herte y-laft.
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.
' So theeke,' quod he, ' ful wel coude I
yow quyte
With blering of a proud milleres yë, 3865
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
But ik am old, me list not pley for age;
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now
forage,
This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,
Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres,
But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers; 3871
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.
We olde men, I drede, so fare we;
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype; 3875
We hopen ay, whyl that the world wol
pype.
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,

To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leek; for thogh our might be
goon,
Our wil desireth folie ever in oon. 3880
For whan we may nat doon, than wol we
speke;
Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y-reke.
Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal
devyse,
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse;
Thise foure sparkles longen un-to
elde. 3885
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
But wil ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to
renne. 3890
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it
gon;
And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,
Til that almost al empty is the tonne.
The stream of lyf now droppeth on the
chimbe; 3895
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.'
Whan that our host hadde herd this
sermoning,

He gan to speke as lordly as a king; 3900
 He seide, 'what amounteth al this
 wit?
 What shul we speke alday of holy
 writ?
 The devel made a reve for to preche,
 And of a souter a shipman or a leche.
 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the
 tyme, 3905
 Lo, Depesford! and it is half-way pryme.
 Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is
 inne;
 It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.'
 'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the
 Reve,

'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow
 greve, 3910
 Though I answare and somdel sette his
 howve;
 For leweful is with force force of-showve.
 This dronke millere bath y-told us heer,
 How that bigyled was a carpenteer,
 Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon. 3915
 And, by your leve, I shal him quyte
 anoon;
 Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
 I pray to god his nekke mote breke;
 He can wel in myn yë seen a stalke,
 But in his owne he can nat seen a
 balke. 3920

THE REVES TALE.

Here biginneth the Reves tale.

AT Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
 Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,
 Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a
 melle;
 And this is verray soth that I yow telle.
 A Miller was ther dwelling many a
 day; 3925
 As eny pekok he was proud and gay.
 Pypen he coude and fisse, and nettes
 bete,
 And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and
 shete;
 And by his belt he baar a long panade,
 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the
 blade. 3930
 A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche;
 Ther was no man for peril dorste him
 touche.
 A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose;
 Round was his face, and camuse was his
 nose.
 As piled as an ape was his skulle. 3935
 He was a market-beter atte full.
 Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him
 legge,
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
 A thief he was for sothe of corn and
 mele,
 And that a sly, and usaunt for to
 stele. 3940

His name was hoten dëynous Simkin.
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;
 The person of the toun hir fader was.
 With hir he yaf ful many a panne of
 bras,
 For that Simkin sholde in his blood
 allye. 3945
 She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;
 For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
 But she were well y-norissed and a
 mayde,
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
 And she was proud, and pert as is a
 pye. 3950
 A ful fair sighte was it on hem two;
 On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go
 With his tipet bounden about his heed,
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
 And Simkin hadde hosen of the
 same. 3955
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but
 'dame.'
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the
 weye
 That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,
 But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin
 With panade, or with knyf, or boyde-
 kin. 3960
 For lalous folk ben perilous evermo,
 Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.
 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
 She was as digne as water in a dich;

And ful of hoker and of bisemare. 3965
 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
 What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
 That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
 Of twenty year, with-outen any mo, 3970
 Savinge a child that was of half-yeer
 age;

In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
 This wenche thikke and wel y-grown
 was,

With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;
 With buttokes brode and brestes rounde
 and hye, 3975

But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.
 The person of the toun, for she was
 feir,

In purpos was to maken hir his heir
 Bothe of his catel and his messuage, 3979
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
 His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye
 In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;
 For holy chirches good moot been de-
 scended

On holy chirches blood, that is descended.
 Therefore he wolde his holy blood hon-
 oure, 3985

Though that he holy chirche sholde
 devoure.

Gret soken hath this miller, out of
 doute,

With whete and malt of al the land
 aboute;

And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
 Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cante-
 bregge, 3990

Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt
 y-grounde.

And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;
 Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.
 For which this miller stal bothe mele
 and corn 3995

An hundred tyme more than biforn;
 For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,
 But now he was a thief outrageously,
 For which the wardeyn chidde and made
 fare. 3999

But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare;
 He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat
 so.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes
 two,

That dwelten in this halle, of which I
 seye.

Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,
 And, only for hir mirthe and revel-
 rye, 4005

Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,
 To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
 To goon to mille and seen hir corn
 y-grounde;

And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,
 The miller shold nat stele hem half a
 pekke 4010

Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem
 reve;

And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem
 leve.

Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight
 that other;

Of o toun were they born, that highte
 Strother,

Fer in the north, I can nat telle
 where. 4015

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.

Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also
 Iohn,

With good swerd and with bokeler by
 hir syde.

Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no
 gyde, 4020

And at the mille the sak adoun he
 layth.

Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-
 fayth;

How fares thy faire doghter and thy
 wyf?'

'Aleyn! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by
 my lyf,

And Iohn also, how now, what do ye
 heer?' 4025

'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede
 has na peer;

Him boës serve him-selve that has na
 swayn,

Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
 Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,

Swa werkes ay the wanges in his
 heed. 4030

And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,
 To grinde our corn and carie it ham
 agayn;

I pray yow spede us hethen that ye
 may.'

'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by
 my fay;
 What wol ye doon whyl that it is in
 hande?' 4035
 'By god, right by the hoper wil I
 stande,'
 Quod Iohn, 'and se how that the corn
 gas in;
 Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,
 How that the hoper wagges til and fra.'
 Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow
 swa, 4040
 Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
 And se how that the mele falles down
 In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.
 For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your
 sort;
 I is as ille a miller as are ye.' 4045
 'This miller smyled of hir nycetee,
 And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a
 wyle;
 They wene that no man may hem bi-
 gyle;
 But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir
 yē
 For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
 The more queynte creakes that they
 make, 4051
 The more wol I stele whan I take.
 In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem
 bren.
 "The gretteste clerkes been noght the
 wysest men,"
 As whylom to the wolf thus spak the
 mare; 4055
 Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.'
 Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,
 Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;
 He loketh up and down til he hath
 founde
 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-
 bounde 4060
 Bihinde the mille, under a levesel;
 And to the hors he gooth him faire and
 wel;
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
 And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth
 gon
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
 Forth with wehee, thurgh thikk and
 thurgh thenne. 4066
 This miller gooth agayn, no word he
 seyde,

But dooth his note, and with the clerkes
 pleyde,
 Til that hir corn was faire and wel
 y-grounde.
 And whan the mele is sakked and y-
 bounde, 4070
 This Iohn goth out and fynt his hors
 away,
 And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weyla-
 way!
 Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes
 banes,
 Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at
 anes!
 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.'
 This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and
 corn, 4076
 Al was out of his mynde his housbond-
 ryre.
 'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan
 to crye.
 The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,
 She seyde, 'allas! your hors goth to the
 fen 4080
 With wilde mares, as faste as he may go.
 Unthank come on his hand that bond
 him so,
 And he that bettre sholde han knit the
 reyne'
 'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes
 peyne,
 Lay down thy swerd, and I wil myn
 alswa; 4085
 I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;
 By goddes herte he sal nat scape us
 bathe.
 Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
 Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!'
 This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne
 To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek
 Iohn 4091
 And whan the miller saugh that they
 were gon,
 He half a busschel of hir flour hath
 take,
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
 He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were
 aferd; 4095
 Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
 For al his art; now lat hem goon hir
 weye.
 Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children
 pleye;

They gete him nat so lightly, by my
croun!

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa,
warderere, 4101

Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him
here!

But shortly, til that it was verray night,
They coude nat, though they do al hir
might,

Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,
Til in a dich they caughte him atte
laste. 4106

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,
Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth
Aleyn.

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was
born!

Now are we drive til hething and til
scorn. 4110

Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,
And namely the miller; weylaway!'

Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the
way

Toward the mille, and Bayard in his
hond. 4115

The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,
For it was night, and forther mighte
they noght;

But, for the love of god, they him bi-
soght

Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.
The miller seyde agayn, 'if ther be
eny, 4120

Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your
part.

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned
art;

Ye conne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.

Lat see now if this place may suffyse,
Or make it roum with speche, as is youre
gyse.' 4126

'Now, Symond,' seyde Iohn, 'by seint
Cutberd,

Ay is thou mery, and this is faire an-
swerd.

I have herd seyde, man sal taa of twa
thinges

Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he
bringes. 4130

But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere,

Get us som mete and drinke, and make
us chere,

And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.
With empty hand men may na haukes
tulle;

Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.'
This miller in-to toun his doghter
sende 4136

For ale and breed, and rosted hem a
goos,

And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon
loos;

And in his owne chambre hem made a
bed

With shetes and with chalons faire y-
spred, 4140

Noght from his owne bed ten foot or
twelve.

His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,
Right in the same chambre, by and by;

It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the
place. 4145

They soupen and they speke, hem to
solace,

And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

Wel hath this miller vernisshed his
heed;

Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat
reed. 4150

He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the
nose

As he were on the quakke, or on the
pose.

To bedde he gooth, and with him goth
his wyf.

As any Iay she light was and Iolyf,
So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet. 4155

The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yeve the child to
souke.

And whan that dronken al was in the
crouke, 4158

To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn;

Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale.
This miller hath so wisly bidded ale,

That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,
Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.

His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,
Men mighte hir routing here two fur-
long; 4166

The wenche routeth eek *par compaigne*.

Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepewost?
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now? 4170
Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle!
A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!
Wha herkened ever slyk a ferly thing?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.
This lange night ther tydes me na
reste; 4175

But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.
For Iohn,' seyde he, 'als ever moot I
thryve,

If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;
For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says
thus, 4180

That gif a man in a point be y-greved,
That in another he sal be releved.
Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,
And we han had an il fit al this day.
And sin I sal have neen amendement, 4185
Agayn my los I wil have esement.
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!'

This Iohn answerde, 'Alayn, avyse
thee,

The miller is a perilous man,' he seyde,
'And gif that he out of his sleep
abreyde, 4190
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.'

Aleyn answerde, 'I count him nat a
flye;'
And up he rist, and by the wenche he
crepte.

This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,
Til he so ny was, er she mighte
espye, 4195

That it had been to late for to crye,
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;
Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of
Iohn.

This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or
two,

And to him-self he maketh routhe and
wo: 4200

'Allas!' quod he, 'this is a wikked Iape;
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felawe som-what for his
harm;

He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
He aunted him, and has his nedes sped,
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed; 4206
And when this Iape is tald another day,

I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!
'Unhardy is unsely,' thus men
sayth.' 4210

And up he roos and softely he wente
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it
hente,

And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.
Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,

And gan awake, and wente hir out to
pisse, 4215

And gan agayn, and gan hir cradel
misse,

And groped heer and ther, but she fond
noon.

'Allas!' quod she, 'I hadde almost mis-
goon;

I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.
Ey, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule
y-sped: 4220

And forth she gooth til she the cradel
fond.

She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoghte nought
but good,

By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
And niste wher she was, for it was
derk; 4225

But faire and wel she creep in to the
clerk,

And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught
a sleep.

With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up
leep,

And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.
So mery a lit ne hadde she nat ful
yore; 4230

He priketh harde and depe as he were
mad.

This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.

Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,
For he had swonken al the longe
night; 4235

And seyde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!'

'Now dere lemman,' quod she, 'go,
far weel! 4240

But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,
Whan that thou wendest homward by
the melle,

Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde
That was y-maked of thyn owne
mele, 4245
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.
And, gode lemman, god thee save and
kepe!

And with that word almost she gan to
wepe.

Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it
dawe,

I wol go crepen in by my felawe;' 4250
And fond the cradel with his hand anon,
'By god,' thoughte he, 'al wrang I have
misgon;

Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.

I woot wel by the cradel, I have
misgo, 4255

Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.'
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.

He wende have copen by his felawe
Iohn;

And by the miller in he creep anon, 4260
And caughte hym by the nekke, and
softe he spak :

He seyde, 'thou, Iohn, thou swynes-
heed, awak

For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.
For by that lord that called is seint Iame,
As I have thryes, in this shorte night, 4265
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,
Whyl thou hast as a coward been agast.'

'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller,
'hast?

A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,
'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dig-
nitee! 4270

Who dorste be so bold to disparage
My doghter, that is come of swich
linage?'

And by the throte-bolle he caughte
Alayn.

And he hente hym despitously agayn,
And on the nose he smoot him with his
fest. 4275

Doun ran the bloddy stream up-on his
brest;

And in the floor, with nose and mouth
to-broke,

They walwe as doon two pigges in a
poke.

And up they goon, and doun agayn
anon,

Til that the miller sporned at a
stoon, 4280

And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf,
That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;
For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight

With Iohn the clerk, that waked hedde
al night.

And with the fal, out of hir sleep she
breyde— 4285

'Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,' she
seyde,

In manus tuas! lord, to thee I calle!
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,

Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but
deed;

There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn
heed; 4290

Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.'
This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he
myghte,

And graspeth by the walles to and fro,
To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,

And knew the estres bet than dide this
Iohn, 4295

And by the wal a staf she fond anon,
And saugh a litel shimering of a light,
For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;

And by that light she saugh hem bothe
two,

But sikerly she niste who was who, 4300
But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yē.

And whan she gan the whyte thing
espye,

She wende the clerk hadde wered a vol-
upeer.

And with the staf she drough ay neer and
neer,

And wende han hit this Aleyn at the
fulle, 4305

And smoot the miller on the pyled
skulle,

That doun he gooth and cryde, 'harrow!
I dye!'

Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him
lye;

And greythen hem, and toke hir hors
anon,

And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they
gon. 4310

And at the mille yet they toke hir cake
Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,
 And hath y-lost the grinding of the
 whete,
 And payed for the soper every-deel 4315
 Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him
 weel.
 His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
 Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!

And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful
 sooth,
 'Him thar nat wene wel that yvel
 dooth; 4320
 A gyLOUR shal him-self bigyled be.'
 And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,
 Save al this companye grete and smale!
 Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

Here is ended the Reeves tale.

THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

The prologe of the Cokes Tale.

THE Cook of London, whyl the Reve
 spak, 4325
 For Ioye, him thoughte, he clawed him
 on the bak,
 'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes pas-
 sioun,
 This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun
 Upon his argument of herbergage!
 Wel seyde Salomon in his langage, 4330
 "Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn
 hous;"
 For herberwing by nighte is perilous.
 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
 Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee.
 I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and
 care, 4335
 If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,
 Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
 He hadde a Iape of malice in the derk.
 But god forbede that we stinten here;
 And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to
 here 4340
 A tale of me, that am a povre man,
 I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
 A litel Iape that fil in our citee.'
 Our host answerde, and seide, 'I
 graunte it thee;
 Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be
 good; 4345

For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
 And many a Iakke of Dover hastow sold
 That hath been twyes hoot and twyes
 cold.
 Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
 For of thy persly yet they fare the
 wors, 4350
 That they han eten with thy stubbel-
 goos;
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
 Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.
 But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for
 game,
 A man may seye ful sooth in game and
 pley.' 4355
 'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger,
 'by my fey,
 But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the
 Fleming seith;
 And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen
 heer,
 Though that my tale be of an hos-
 tileer. 4360
 But natheless I wol nat telle it yit,
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be
 quit.'
 And ther-with-al he lough and made
 chere,
 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after
 here.

Thus endeth the Prologe of the Cokes tale

THE COKES TALE.

Heer bigynneth the Cokes tale.

A PRENTIS whylom dwelled in our
citee, 4365

And of a craft of vitailleurs was he;
Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the
shawe,

Broun as a beric, a propre short felawe,
With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.

Dauncen he coude so wel and Iolily, 4370
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.

He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony swete;

Wel was the wenche with him mighte
mete.

At every brydale wolde he singe and
hoppe, 4375

He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For whan ther any ryding was in
Chepe,

Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.
Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,

And daunced wel, he wolde nat come
ageyn. 4380

And gadered him a meinee of his sort
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich
disport.

And ther they setten steven for to mete
To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete.

For in the toune nas ther no prentys, 4385
That fairer coude caste a paire of dys

Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was
free

Of his dispense, in place of privetee.
That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;

For often tyme he fond his box ful
bare. 4390

For sikerly a prentis revelour,
That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,

His maister shal it in his shoppe abyen,
Al have he no part of the minstralcyen;

For thefte and riot, they ben conver-
tible, 4395

Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.
Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,

They been ful wrothe al day, as men may
see.

This Ioly prentis with his maister
bood, 4399

Til he were ny out of his prentishood,
Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,

And somtyme lad with revel to New-
gate;

But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,
Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte,

Of a proverbe that seith this same word,
'Wel bet is roten appel out of hord 4406

Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;

It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,
Than he shende alle the servants in the
place. 4410

Therefore his maister yaf him acquittance,
And bad him go with sorwe and with
meschance;

And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his
leve.

Now lat him riote al the night or leve.
And for ther is no theef with-oute a
louke, 4415

That helpeth him to wasten and to
souke

Of that he brybe can or borwe may,
Anon he sente his bed and his array

Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,
That lovede dys and revel and disport,

And hadde a wyf that heeld for counte-
nance 4421

A shoppe, and swyved for hir susten-
ance.

* * * * *

Of this Cokes tale maketh Chaucer na more.

[For The Tale of Gamelin, see the Appendix.]

GROUP B.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

The wordes of the Hoost to the companye.

OUR Hoste sey wel that the brighte
sonne

The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part, and half an houre, and
more;

And though he were not depe expert in
lore,

He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5
Of April, that is messenger to May;
And sey wel that the shadwe of every
tree

Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it.
And therfor by the shadwe he took his
wit 10

That Phebus, which that shoon so clere
and brighte,

Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on
highte;

And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the klokke, he gan con-
clude,

And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'I warne yow, al
this route, 16

The fourthe party of this day is goon;
Now, for the love of god and of seint
Iohn,

Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and
day, 20

And steleth from us, what prively slep-
inge,

And what thurgh negligence in our wak-
inge,

As dooth the stream, that turneth never
agayn,

Descending fro the montaigne in-to
playn. 24

Wel can Senek, and many a philosopre
Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.

"For los of catel may recovered be,
But los of tyme shendeth us," quod he.

It wol nat come agayn, with-ouen drede,
Na more than wol Malkins mayden-
hede, 30

Whan she hath lost it in hir wantow-
nesse;

Iat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.
'Sir man of lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye
blis,

Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;
Ye been submitted thurgh your free
assent 35

To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.
Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,
Than have ye doon your devoir atte
leste.'

'Hoste,' quod he, '*depardieux* ich
assente,

To breke forward is not myn entente. 40
Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.

For swich lawe as man yeveth another
wight,

He sholde him-selven usen it by right;
Thus wol our text; but natheles cer-
teyn 45

I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,
But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
On metres and on ryming craftily,

Hath seyde hem in swich English as he
can 49

Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.
And if he have not seyde hem, leve
brother,

In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and doun
Mo than Ovyde made of mencion

In his Epistelles, that been ful olde. 55
What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben
tolde?

In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,
And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,
Thise noble wyves and thise lovers eke.

Who-so that wol his large volume seke
Clepeth the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,
Ther may he seen the large woundes
wyde 62

Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65

The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;

The bareyne yle standing in the see;
 The dreynte Leander for his Erro;
 The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70
 Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladomëa;
 The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,
 Thy litel children hauging by the hals
 For thy Iason, that was of love so
 fals!

O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75
 Your wyfhod he comendeth with the
 beste!

But certainly no word ne wryteth he
 Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
 That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;
 Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy'; 80
 Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,
 How that the cursed king Antiochus
 Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,

When he hir threw up-on the pavement.
 And therfor he, of ful avysement, 86
 Nolde never wryte in none of his ser-
 mouns

Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,
 Ne I wol noon reherse, if that I may.

But of my tale how shal I doon this
 day? 90

Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides —

Metamorphoseos wot what I mene: —
 But nathelees, I recche nought a bene
 Though I come after him with hawe-
 bake; 95

I speke in prose, and lat him rymes
 make.'

And with that word he, with a sobre
 chere,

Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

THE PROLOGE OF THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE.

O HATEFUL harm! condicion of poverté!
 With thurst, with cold, with hunger so
 confounded! 100

To asken help thee shameth in thyn
 herte;

If thou noon aske, with nede artow so
 wounded,

That verray nede unwrappeth al thy
 wounde hid!

Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indi-
 gence

Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy de-
 spence! 105

Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bit-
 terly,

He misleparteth richesse temporal;
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully,

And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath
 al.

'Parfay,' seistow, 'somytyme he rekne
 shal, 110

Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the
 glede,

For he nought helpeth needfulle in hir
 nede.'

Herkne what is the sentence of the
 wyse: —

'Bet is to dyën than have indigence;'

'Thy selve neighebour wol thee de-
 spyse;'

If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence: —

'Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke;'
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that
 prikke!

'If thou be povre, thy brother hateth
 thee, 120

And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee,
 alas!'

O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!

Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes as*,

But with *sis cink*, than renneth for your
 chauce; 125

At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!

Ye seken lond and see for your winniges,
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat

Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat.

I were right now of tales desolat, 131
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a
 yere,

Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal
 here.

THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.

Here beginneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye
Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and
trewe, 135

That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe ;
Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,
That every wight hath deyntee to chaf-
fare

With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir
ware. 140

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende ;
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
Non other message wolde they thider
sende,

But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the
ende ; 145

And in swich place, as thoughte hem
avantage

For her entente, they take her herber-
gage.

Soiourned han this marchants in that
toun

A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance,
And so bifel, that the excellent renoun 150
Of thempourous doghter, dame Cust-
tance,

Reported was, with every circumstance,
Un-to these Surrien marchants in swich
wyse,

Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune vois of every
man— 155

‘Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee,
Nas never swich another as is she ;

I prey to god in honour hir sustene, 160
And wolde she were of al Europe the
quene.

In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye ;

To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye.

She is mirour of alle curteisye ; 166

Hir herte is verray chambre of holi-
nesse,

Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.’

And al this vois was soth, as god is
trewe,

But now to purpos lat us turne agayn ;
These marchants han doon fraught hir
shippes newe, 171

And, whan they han this blisful mayden
seyn,

Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
And doon her nedes as they han don
yore,

And linen in wele ; I can sey yow no
more. 175

Now fel it, that these marchants stode in
grace

Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye ;
For whan they came from any strange
place,

He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,
Make hem good chere, and bisily espye
Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere 181
The wondres that they mighte seen or
here.

Amonges othere thinges, specially
These marchants han him told of dame
Custance,

So gret noblesse in earnest, seriously, 185
That this sowdan hath caught so gret
plesance

To han hir figure in his remembrance,
That al his lust and al his bisy cure
Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book 190
Which that men clepe the heven, y-written
was

With sterres, whan that he his birthe
took,

That he for love shulde han his deeth,
allas !

For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,

Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it
rede, 195
The deeth of every man, withouten
drede.

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Iulius, er they were born ;
The stryf of Thebes ; and of Ercules, 200
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deeth ; but mennes wittes been so
dulle,
That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
And, shortly of this mater for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entente, 206
And seyde hem certain, 'but he mighte
have grace
To han Custance with-inne a litel space,
He nas but deed;' and charged hem, in
hye,
To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

Diverse men diverse thinges seyden ;
They argumenten, casten up and down ;
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,
They speken of magik and abusioun ;
But finally, as in conclusioun, 215
They can not seen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe 'that no Cristen prince wolde
fayn 222
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete
That us were taught by Mahoun our
prophete.'

And he answerde, 'rather than I lese 225
Custance, I wol be cristned douteles ;
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees ;
Saveth my lyf, and beeth night recche-
les 229
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure ;
For in this wo I may not longe endure.'

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun ?
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,

And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chiv-
alrye, 235
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here ;

How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges shulde y-cristned
be, 240
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certain gold, I noot what quantitee,
And her-to founden suffisant seurtee ;
This same acord was sworn on eyther
syde ;
Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee
gyde ! 245

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance
That themperour, of his grete noblesse,
Hath shapen for his doghter dame
Custance.

Wel may men knowe that so gret ordi-
nance 250
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to
wende,
Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,
And other folk y-nowe, this is the
ende ; 255
And notified is thurgh-out the toun
That every wight, with gret devocioun,
Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge, 260
I sey, the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger tarynge,
But forthward they hem dresen, alle and
some ;
Custance, that was with sorwe al over-
come,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to
wende ; 265
For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.

Allas ! what wonder is it though she
wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacioun
Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,

And to be bounden under subieccioun 270
 Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.
 Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,
 That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.

'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child
 Custance, 274
 Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe,
 And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance
 Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,
 Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte
 Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,
 Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë. 280

Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun
 I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;
 But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
 So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille;
 I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille. 285
 Women are born to thraldom and penance,
 And to ben under mannes governance.'

I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal
 Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,
 Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hani-bal 290
 That Romayns hath venquissed tymes thre,
 Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee
 As in the chambre was for hir departinge;
 Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.

O firste moevyng cruel firmament, 295
 With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
 And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
 That naturelly wolde holde another way,
 Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
 At the beginning of this fiers viage, 300
 That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
 Of which the lord is helpeles falle, alas!

Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.
 O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas! 305
 O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!
 Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
 Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!
 Was ther no philosophre in all thy toun? 310
 Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?
 Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
 Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
 Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?
 Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe. 315

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde
 Solempnely, with every circumstance.
 'Now Iesu Crist be with yow alle,' she sayde;
 Ther nis namore but 'farewel! faire Custance!'
 She peyneth hir to make good countenance, 320
 And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,
 And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,
 Espyë! hath hir sones pleyn entente,
 How he wol lete his olde sacrifices, 325
 And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
 And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.
 And when assembled was this folk infere,
 She sette hir doun, and sayde as ye shal here.

'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen everichon, 330
 How that my sone in point is for to lete
 The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
 Yeven by goddes message Makomete.
 But oon avow to grete god I hete, 334
 The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte
 Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe
 But thraldom to our bodies and penance.
 And afterward in here to be drawe

For we reneyed Mahoun our cre-
ance? 340

But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shall make us sauf for evermore?'

They sworn and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir
stonde; 345
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes
fonde;

And she hath this emprise y-take on
honde,

Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this
wyse. 350

'We shul first feyne us Cristendom to
take,

Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte;
And I shal swich a feste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so
whyte, 355

She shal have nede to wasshe away the
rede,

Thogh she a font-ful water with hir
lede.'

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,
Virago, thou Semyram the secoude,
O serpent under femininitee, 360
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle
y-bounde,

O feyned womman, al that may confoude
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day 365
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde
way!

Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage.
Thou wolt fordoon this Cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the
whyte! 370
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt
begyle.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and
warie,
Leet prively hir conceil goon in way.

What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye
hir lay,
And Cristendom of preestes handes
fonge,
Repenting hir she hethen was so longe,

Biseching him to doon hir that honour,
That she moste han the Cristen men to
feste; 380

'To plesen hem I wol do my labour.'
The sowdan seith, 'I wol don at your
heste,'

And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.
So glad he was, he niste what to seye;
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth
hir weye. 385

*Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars
secunda.*

Arryved ben this Cristen folk to londe,
In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,
And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde,
First to his moder, and al the regne
aboute,

And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of
doute, 390

And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the
quene,

The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray
Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere;
The moder of the sowdan riche and gay,
Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere 396
As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde
A softe pas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Iulius, 400
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a
bost,

Was royaller, ne more curious
Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,
The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe, 405
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.

The sowdan comth him-self sone after
this

So royally, that wonder is to telle,

And welcometh hir with alle Ioye and blis.

And thus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle. 410

The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste

That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde, 415

And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.
Here may men feste and royaltee biholde,
And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,
But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse. 420

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitternesse;

Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse, 425
Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihinde.

For shortly for to tellen at o word,
The sowdan and the Cristen everichone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord,
But it were only dame Custance alone. 431

This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted 435

That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted.
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot,

And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle 440

Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

A certain tresor that she thider ladde,
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee

They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,

And forth she sayleth in the salte see. 445
O my Custance, ful of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere!

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she, 450

'O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lames blood full of pitee,
That wash the world fro the olde iniquitee,

Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe. 455

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of heven with his woundes newe,
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the spere,

Flemer of feendes out of him and here 460
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf tamenden.'

Yeres and dayes flect this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte

Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure; 465
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn? 470

Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?

And I answer to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,

Was with the leoun frete er he asterte? 475

No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miraclo
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes;

Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
 By certein menes ofte, as knowen
 clerkes, 480
 Doth thing for certein ende that ful
 derk is
 To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
 Ne conne not knowe his prudent pur-
 veyance.

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,
 Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the
 see? 485

Who kepte Ionas in the fisshes mawe
 Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
 Wel may men knowe it was no wight but
 he
 That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drench-
 inge,
 With drye feet thurgh-out the see pass-
 inge. 490

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,
 That power han tanoyen land and see,
 'Bothe north and south, and also west
 and est,
 Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?'
 Sothly, the comaundour of that was he,
 That fro the tempest ay this womman
 kepte 496
 As wel whan [that] she wook as whan
 she slepte.

Wher mighte this womman mete and
 drinke have?
 Three yeer and more how lasteth hir
 vitaille?

Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the
 cave, 500
 Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans
 faille.
 Fyve thousand folk it was as gret mer-
 vaille
 With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.
 God sente his foison at hir gret nede.

She dryveth forth in-to our ocean 505
 Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
 Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,
 Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir
 caste,
 And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
 That thernes wolde it noght of al a
 tyde, 510

The wille of Crist was that she shulde
 abyde.

The constable of the castel down is fare
 To seen this wrak, and al the ship he
 soghte,
 And fond this verry womman ful of care ;
 He fond also the tresor that she broghte.
 In hir langage mercy she bisoghte 516
 The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,
 Hir to delivere of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,
 But algates ther-by was she understonde ;
 The constable, whan him list no lenger
 seche, 521
 This woful womman broghte he to the
 londe;
 She kneleth down, and thanketh goddes
 sonde.
 But what she was, she wolde no man
 seye,
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde
 deye. 525

She seyde, she was so mased in the see
 That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe ;
 The constable hath of hir so greet pitee,
 And eek his wyf, that they wepen for
 routhe,
 She was so diligent, with-outen slouthe,
 To serve and plesen everich in that
 place, 531
 That alle hir loven that loken on hir
 face.

This constable and dame Hermengild his
 wyf
 Were payens, and that contree every-
 where ;
 But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir
 lyf, 535
 And Custance hath so longe sojourned
 there,
 In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
 Til Iesu hath converted thurgh his
 grace
 Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that
 place.

In al that lond no Cristen durste route,
 Alle Cristen folk ben fled fro that con-
 tree 541

Thurgh payens, that conquereden al
aboute
The plages of the North, by land and
see;
To walis fled the Cristianitee 544
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle;
Ther was her refut for the mene whyle.

But yet nere Cristen Britons so exyled
That ther nere somme that in hir pri-
vetee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bi-
gyled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten
three. 550
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte
nat see
But it were with thilke yën of his minde,
With whiche men seen, after that they
ben blinde.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres
day,
For which the constable and his wyf
also 555
And Custance han y-take the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro;
And in hir walk this blinde man they
mette
Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette.

'In name of Crist,' cryde this blinde
Britoun, 561
'Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte
agayn.'
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to
sayn,
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han
slayn, 565
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir
werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his
chirche.

The constable wex abashed of that sight,
And seyde, 'what amounteth al this
fare?'
Custance answerde, 'sire, it is Cristes
might, 570
That helpeth folk out of the feendes
snare.'

And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were
eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bi-
leve.

This constable was no-thing lord of this
place 575
Of which I speke, ther he Custance
fond,
But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,
Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond,
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel
here, 580
But turne I wol agayn to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir
whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in
that toun, 585
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verrailly him thoughte he shulde
spille
But he of hir mighte ones have his wille.

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no sinne, by no weye; 590
And, for despyt, he compassed in his
thoght
To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was
aweye,
And prively, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambre whyl she
slepte. 595

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas tempta-
cions,
Al softly is to the bed y-go,
And kitte the throte of Hermengild
a-two, 600
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame
Custance,
And wente his wey, ther god yeve him
meschance!
Sone after comth this constable hoom
agayn,

And eek Alla, that king was of that
lond,

And saugh his wyf despitously y-slain,
For which ful ofte he weep and wrong
his hond, 606

And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance; allas! what mighte
she seye?

For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

To king Alla was told al this meschance,
And eek the tyme, and where, and in
what wyse 611

That in a ship was founden dame
Custance,

As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in misaventure. 616

For as the lomb toward his deeth is
brought,

So stant this innocent bifore the king;
This false knight that hath this tresoun
wroght

Berth hir on hond that she hath doon
this thing. 620

But nathelees, ther was greet moorning
Among the peple, and seyn, 'they can
not gesse

That she hath doon so greet a wikked-
nesse.

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermengild right as her lyf.
Of this bar witnessse everich in that
hous 626

Save he that Hermengild slow with his
knyf.

This gentil king hath caught a gret mo-
tyf

Of this witnessse, and thoghte he wolde
enquere

Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

Allas! Custance! thou hast no cham-
pioun,

Ne fighte canstow nought, so weyla-
wey!

But he, that starf for our redemp-
cioun

And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he
lay)

So be thy stronge champioun this day!
For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe, 636
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as
swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus
she sayde,

'Immortal god, that savedest Susanne
Fro false blame, and thou, merciful
mayde, 640

Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,
Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,
If I be gilteles of this felonye,
My socour be, for elles I shal dye!'

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale
face, 645

Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no
grace,

And swich a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighte knowe his face, that was
bistad,

Amonges alle the faces in that route: 650
So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;
An emperoures doghter stant allone; 655
She hath no wight to whom to make hir
mone.

O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,
Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede!

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660
That from his yën ran the water doun.

'Now hastily do fecche a book,' quod he,
'And if this knight wol sweren how that
she

This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal ben our
Iustyse.' 665

A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,
Was fet, and on this book he swoor
anoon

She gilty was, and in the mene whyles
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon, 670
And bothe his yën broste out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, 'thou hast desclaundred
gilteless

The doghter of holy chirche in hey
presence; 675
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my
pees.'

Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mased folk they stoden everichone,
For drede of wreche, save Custance
allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repent-
ance 680

Of hem that hadden wrong suspeioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;

And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,

The king, and many another in that
place, 685

Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his un-
trouthe

By Iugement of Alla hastily;
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth
gret routhe.

And after this Iesus, of his mercy, 690
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely

This holy mayden, that is so bright and
shene,

And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a
quene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and na
mo, 695

The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?

Ilir thoughte hir cursed herte brast
a-two;

She wolde nocht hir sone had do so;
Ilir thoughte a despit, that he sholde
take

So strange a creature un-to his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.

What sholde I tellen of the royaltee
At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?

The fruit of every tale is for to seye; 706
They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and
singe, and pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and
right;

For, thogh that wyves been ful holy
thinges,

They moste take in pacience at night 710
Swich maner necessities as been ples-
inges

To folk that han y-wedded hem with
ringes,

And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde
As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon, 715
And to a bishop and his constable eke

He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is
goon

To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke;
Now faire Custance, that is so humble
and meke,

So longe is goon with childe, til that
stille 720

She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes
wille.

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;
Mauricius at the font-stoon they him
calle;

This Constable dooth forth come a
messenger,

And wroot un-to his king, that cleped
was Alle, 725

How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,
And othere tydings speedful for to seye;

He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth
his weye.

This messenger, to doon his avantage, 729
Un-to the kinges moder rydeth swythe,

And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,
'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and
blythe,

And thanke god an hundred thousand
sythe;

My lady quene hath child, with-uten
doute.

To Ioye and blisse of al this regne
aboute. 735

Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,
That I mot bere with al the haste I may;

If ye wol aught un-to your sone the
king,

I am your servant, bothe night and day!

Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tyme,
 nay; 740
 But heer al night I wol thou take thy
 reste,
 Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
 And stolen were his lettres prively
 Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn;
 And countrefeted was ful subtilly 746
 Another lettre, wrought ful sinfully,
 Un-to the king direct of this matere
 Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

The lettre spak, 'the queen delivered
 was 750
 Of so horrible a feendly creature,
 That in the castel noon so hardy was
 That any whyle dorste ther endure.
 The moder was an elf, by aventure
 Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye, 755
 And every wight hateth hir companye.'

Wo was this king whan he this lettre
 had seyn,
 But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes
 sore,
 But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,
 'Welcome the sonde of Crist for ever-
 more 760
 To me, that am now lerned in his lore;
 Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy ples-
 aunce,
 My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce!

Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
 And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-
 cominge; 765
 Crist, whan him list, may sende me an
 heir
 More agreeable than this to my lykinge.'
 This lettre he seleth, prively wepinge,
 Which to the messenger was take sone,
 And forth he gooth; ther is na more to
 done. 770

O messenger, fulfil of dronkenesse,
 Strong is thy breath, thy limes faltren ay,
 And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
 Thy mind is lorn, thou Ianglest as a Iay,
 Thy face is turned in a newe array! 775
 Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
 There is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English
 digne
 Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
 And therfor to the feend I thee resigne,
 Let him endyten of thy traitorye! 781
 Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,
 Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,
 Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in
 helle!

This messenger comth fro the king agayn,
 And at the kinges modres court he
 lighte, 786
 And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
 And plesed him in al that ever she
 mighte.
 He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.
 He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790
 Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon
 And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;
 'The king comandeth his constable
 anon,
 Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh
 Iuÿse, 795
 That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
 Custance in-with his regne for tabyde
 Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde;

But in the same ship as he hir fond,
 Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir
 gere, 800
 He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the
 lond,
 And charge hir that she never eft come
 there.'
 O my Custance, wel may thy goost have
 fere
 And sleping in thy dreem been in pen-
 ance,
 When Donegild caste al this ordi-
 nance! 805

This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,
 Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,
 And to the constable he the lettre took;
 And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
 Ful ofte he seyde 'allas!' and 'weyla-
 wey!' 810
 'Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this
 world endure?
 So ful of sinne is many a creature!

O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,
 Sith thou art rightful Iuge, how may it
 be
 That thou wolt suffren innocents to
 spille, 815
 And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?
 O good Custance, alas! so wo is me
 That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye
 On shames deeth; ther is noon other
 weye!

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that
 place, 820
 Whan that the king this cursed lettre
 sente,
 And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
 The ferthe day toward hir ship she
 wente.
 But natheles she taketh in good entente
 The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the
 stonde, 825
 She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy
 sonde!

He that me kepte fro the false blame
 Why! I was on the londe amonges yow,
 He can me kepe from harme and eek fro
 shame
 In salte see, al-though I se nat how. 830
 As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
 In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
 That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.'

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,
 And kneling, pitously to him she
 seyde, 835
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non
 harm.'
 With that hir kerchef of hir heed she
 breyde,
 And over his litel yën she it leyde;
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
 And in-to heven hir yën up she caste. 840

'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright,
 Marye,
 Sooth is that thurgh wommannes egge-
 ment
 Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
 For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;
 Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment; 845
 Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene
 Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn
 yën,
 And yet now liveth my litel child, par-
 fay!
 Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful
 cryën, 850
 Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire
 may,
 Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of
 day,
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
 Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt, 855
 That never wroughtest sinne as yet, par-
 dee,
 Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
 O mercy, dere Constable!' quod she;
 'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with
 thee;
 And if thou darst not saven him, for
 blame, 860
 So kis him ones in his fadres name!'

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the
 londe,
 And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routh-
 lees!'
 And up she rist, and walketh doun the
 stonde
 Toward the ship; hir folweth al the
 prees, 865
 And ever she preyeth hir child to holde
 his pees;
 And taketh hir leve, and with an holy
 entente
 She blesseth hir; and in-to ship she
 wente.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,
 Habundantly for hir, ful longe space, 870
 And other necessities that sholde nede
 She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes
 grace!
 For wind and weder almighty god pur-
 chace,
 And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre
 seye;
 But in the see she dryveth forth hir
 weye. 875

*Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars
 tercia.*

Alla the king comth hoom, sone after
 this,
 Unto his castel of the which I tolde, 877
 And axeth wher his wyf and his child is.
 The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
 And pleynly al the maner he him tolde
 As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,
 And sheweth the king his seel and [eek]
 his lettre,

And seyde, 'lord, as ye comaunded me
 Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, cer-
 tein.'

This messenger tormented was til he 885
 Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,
 Fro night to night, in what place he had
 leyn.

And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe,
 Ymagined was by whom this harm gan
 springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre
 wroot, 890

And al the venim of this cursed dede,
 But in what wyse, certainly I noot.

Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
 His moder slow, that men may pleynly
 rede,

For that she traitour was to hir li-
 geaunce. 895

Thus endeth olde Donegild with mes-
 chaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,
 Maketh for his wyf and for his child also,
 Ther is no tonge that it telle may.

But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900
 That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
 Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes
 sonde,

Er that hir ship approched un-to londe.

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,
 Of which the name in my text nocht I
 finde, 905

Custance and eek hir child the see up-
 caste.

Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,
 Have on Custance and on hir child som
 minde,

That fallen is in hethen land eft-sonne,
 In point to spille, as I shal telle yow
 sone. 910

Doun from the castel comth ther many a
 wight

To gauren on this ship and on Custance.
 But shortly, from the castel, on a night,
 The lordes styward — god yeve him mes-
 chaunce! —

A theef, that had reneyed our cre-
 aunce, 915

Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he
 sholde

Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or
 nolde.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho
 bigon,

Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously;
 But blisful Marie heelp hir right
 anon; 920

For with hir strugling wel and mightily
 The theef fil over bord al sodeinly,
 And in the see he dreynete for ven-
 geance;

And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept
 Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn
 ende! *Auctor.*

Nat only that thou feytest mannes
 minde, 926

But verrailly thou wolt his body shende;
 Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes
 blinde

Is compleyning, how many-oon may men
 finde

That nocht for werk som-tyme, but for
 thentente 930

To doon this sinne, ben outhur sleyn or
 shente!

How may this wayke womman han this
 strengthe

Hir to defende agayn this renegat?
 O Goliath, unmesurable of lengthe,
 How mighte David make thee so mat,
 So yong and of armure so desolat? 936
 How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful
 face?

Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes
 grace!

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse
 To sleen him, Oloferus, in his tente, 940
 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse

The peple of god? I seye, for this entente,
That, right as god spirit of vigour sente
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sente he might and vigour to Custance. 945

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth
Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,
Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South,
And som-tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!) 950
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeles goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevynesse.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romain Emperour,
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe 955
The slaughtre of Cristen folk, and dishonour
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse,
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anon 960
His senatour, with royal ordinance,
And othere lordes, god wot, many oon,
On Surriens to taken heign vengeance.
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance
Ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende, 965
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally,
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array; ne she nil seye
Of hir estaat, although she sholde deye.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also; 975
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo.
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 980

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hir never the more;
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore, 985
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn,
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain,
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance; 991
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born, 995
How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn;
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood him ageyn, and many of his lineage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence 1000
As to don any king a reverence.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other greet honour;
And so bifel that, in a day or two, 1005
This senatour is to king Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his companye.

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,
This senatour hath lad this child to feste; 1010

I may nat tellen every circumstance,
 Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.
 But soth is this, that, at his modres
 heste,
 Biforn Alla, during the metes space,
 The child stood, loking in the kinges
 face. 1015

This Alla king hath of this child greet
 wonder,
 And to the senatour he seyde anon,
 'Whos is that faire child that stondesth
 yonder?'
 'I moot,' quod he, 'by god, and by seint
 Iohn!
 A moder he hath, but fader hath he non
 That I of woot'—but shortly, in a
 stounde, 1021
 He tolde Alla how that this child was
 founde.

'But god wot,' quod this senatour also,
 'So vertuous a livere in my lyf,
 Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo
 Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of
 wyf; 1026
 I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf
 Thurgh-out her breste, than been a wom-
 man wikke;
 Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that
 prikke.'

Now was this childe as lyk un-to
 Custance 1030
 As possible is a creature to be.
 This Alla hath the face in remembrance
 Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he
 If that the childes moder were aught
 she
 That was his wyf, and prively he sighte,
 And spedde him fro the table that he
 mighte. 1036

'Parfay,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn
 heed!
 I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement,
 That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'
 And afterward he made his argument—
 'What woot I, if that Crist have hider
 y-sent 1041
 My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente
 To my contree fro thennes that she
 wente?'

And, after noon, hoom with the senatour
 Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder
 chaunce. 1045

This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
 And hastily he sente after Custaunce.
 But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce
 Whan that she wiste wherefor was that
 sonde.

Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte
 stonde. 1050

When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir
 grette,
 And weep, that it was routhe for to see.
 For at the firste look he on hir sette
 He knew wel verraily that it was she.
 And she for sorwe as domb stant as a
 tree; 1055
 So was hir herte shet in hir distresse
 Whan she remembered his unkindnesse.

Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte;
 He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—
 'Now god,' quod he, 'and alle his halwes
 brighte 1060

So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
 That of your harm as giltelees am I
 As is Maurice my sone so lyk your
 face;
 Elles the feend me fecche out of this
 place!'

Long was the sobbing and the bitter
 peyne 1065
 Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;
 Greet was the pitee for to here hem
 pleync,
 Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo en-
 cresse.
 I prey yow al my labour to relesse;
 I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe,
 I am so very for to speke of sorwe. 1071

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist
 That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,
 I trowe an hundred tymes been they
 kist,
 And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem
 two 1075
 That, save the Ioye that lasteth evermo,
 Ther is non lyk, that any creature
 Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world
 may dure.

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,
 In relief of hir longe pitous pyne, 1080
 That he wold preye hir fader specially
 That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne
 To vouche-sauf som day with him to
 dyne;
 She preyde him eek, he sholde by no
 weye
 Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye. 1085

Som men wold seyn, how that the child
 Maurice

Doth this message un-to this emperour;
 But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
 To him, that was of so sovereyn honour
 As he that is of Cristen folk the flour, 1090
 Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
 He wente him-self, and so it may wel
 seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
 To come to diner, as he him bisoghte;
 And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095
 Up-on this child, and on his doghter
 thoghte

Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
 Arrayed for this feste in every wyse
 As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him
 dresse, 1100
 And eek his wyf, this emperour to
 mete;

And forth they ryde in Ioye and in glad-
 nesse.
 And whan she saugh hir fader in the
 strete,
 She lighte doun, and falleth him to
 fete.

'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child
 Custance 1105
 Is now ful clene out of your remem-
 brance.

I am your doghter Custance,' quod she,
 'That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye.
 It am I, fader, that in the salte see
 Was put allone and dampned for to
 dye. 1110

Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
 Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
 But thanketh my lord heer of his kinde-
 nesse.'

Who can the pitous Ioye tellen al
 Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus
 y-mette? 1115

But of my tale made an ende I shal;
 The day goth faste, I wol no lenger
 lette.

This glade folk to diner they hem sette;
 In Ioye and blisse at mete I lete hem
 dwelle

A thousand fold wel more than I can
 telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
 Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.
 To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
 But I lete al his storie passen by,
 Of Custance is my tale specially. 1125
 In olde Romayn gestes may men finde
 Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in minde.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey,
 With his Custance, his holy wyf so
 swete,

To Engelond been they come the righte
 wey, 1130

Wher-as they live in Ioye and in quiete.
 But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
 Ioye of this world, for tyme wol nat
 abyde;
 Fro day to night it changeth as the
 tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day 1135
 That him ne moeved outhur conscience,
 Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
 Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence?
 I ne seye but for this ende this sen-
 tence, 1139

That litel whyl in Ioye or in plesance
 Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low
 his rente,

When passed was a yeer, even as I
 gesse,

Out of this world this king Alla he
 hente,

For whom Custance hath ful gret hevi-
 nesse. 1145

Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
 And dame Custance, fynally to seye,
 Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir
 weye.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and
sounde: 1150

Now is she scaped al hir aventure;
And whan that she hir fader hath y-
founded,

Doun on hir kneës falleth she to
grounde;

Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,
She herieth god an hundred thousand
sythe. 1155

Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe; and next foloweth the Shipmannes Prolog.

In vertu and in holy almes-dede
They liven alle, and never a-sonder
wende;

Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede.
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an
ende.

Now Iesu Crist, that of his might may
sende 1160

Ioye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place!
Amen.

THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.

OUR hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,
And seyde, 'good men, herkneth everich
on;

This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 1165
Sir parish prest,' quod he, 'for goddes
bones,

Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.

I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!'

The Persone him answerde, '*benedi-
cite!*' 1170

What eyleth the man, so sinfully to
swere?'

Our hoste answerde, 'O Iankin, be ye
there?'

I smelle a loller in the wind,' quod he.

'How! good men,' quod our hoste, 'herk-
neth me;

Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, 1175
For we shal han a predicacioun;
This loller heer wil prechen us som-
what.'

'Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be
nat,'

Seyed the Shipman; 'heer he shal nat
preche,

He shal no gospel glosen heer ne
teche. 1180

We leve alle in the grete god,' quod he,
'He wolde sowen som difficultee,

Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
My Ioly body shal a tale telle, 1185

And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,
That I shal waken al this companye;

But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
Ne *physices*, ne termes queinte of lawe;

Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.' 1190

Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.

A MERCHANT whylom dwelled at Seint
Denys,

That riche was, for which men helde him
wys;

A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was
she,

Which is a thing that causeth more dis-
pence 1195

Than worth is al the chere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes and at
daunces;

Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.

But wo is him that payen moot for
al; 1200

The sely housbond, algate he mot paye;
 He moot us clothe, and he moot us
 arraye,
 Al for his owene worship richely,
 In which array we daunce lolily.
 And if that he noght may, par-aven-
 ture, 1205
 Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,
 But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
 Than moot another payen for our cost,
 Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.

This noble Marchant heeld a worthy
 hous, 1210
 For which he hadde alday so greet re-
 pair
 For his largesse, and for his wyf was
 fair,
 That wonder is; but herkneth to my
 tale.

Amonges alle his gestic, grete and
 smale,
 Ther was a monk, a fair man and a
 bold, 1215
 I trowe of thritty winter he was old,
 That ever in oon was drawing to that
 place.

This yonge monk, that was so fair of
 face,
 Acquainted was so with the gode man,
 Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220
 That in his hous as famulier was he
 As it possible is any frend to be.

And for as muchel as this gode man
 And eek this monk, of which that I
 bigan,
 Were bothe two y-born in o village, 1225
 The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;
 And he again, he seith nat ones nay,
 But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;
 For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
 Thus been they knit with eterne alli-
 aunce, 1230

And ech of hem gan other for tassure
 Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may
 dure.

Free was daun Iohn, and namely of
 dispence,
 As in that hous; and ful of diligence
 To doon plesaunce, and also greet cos-
 tage. 1235

He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page
 In al that hous; but, after hir degree,
 He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,

When that he cam, som maner honest
 thing;

For which they were as glad of his com-
 ing 1240

As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne
 up-ryseth.

Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day
 Shoop him to make redy his array
 Toward the toun of Brugges for to
 fare, 1245

To byën ther a porcioun of ware;
 For which he hath to Paris sent anon
 A messenger, and preyed hath daun Iohn
 That he sholde come to Seint Denys to
 pleye

With him and with his wyf a day or
 tweye, 1250

Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse.

This noble monk, of which I yow de-
 vyse,

Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
 By-cause he was a man of heigh pru-
 dence,

And eek an officer, out for to ryde, 1255
 To seen hir graunges and hir bernes
 wyde;

And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.
 Who was so welcome as my lord daun
 Iohn,

Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?
 With him broghte he a Iubbe of Mal-
 vesye, 1260

And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage,
 And volatyl, as ay was his usage.
 And thus I lete hem etc and drinke and
 pleye,

This marchant and this monk, a day or
 tweye.

The thridde day, this marchant up arys-
 eth, 1265

And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
 And up in-to his countour-hous goth he
 To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,
 Of thilke yeer, how that it with him
 stood,

And how that he despended hadde his
 good; 1270

And if that he encessed were or noon.
 His hokes and his bagges many oon
 He leith biforn him on his counting-
 bord;

Ful riche was his tresor and his hord.

For which ful faste his countour-dore he
shette; 1275

And eek he nolde that no man sholde
him lette

Of his accountes, for the mene tyme;

And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

Daun Iohn was risen in the morwe
also,

And in the gardin walketh to and
fro, 1280

And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly.

This gode wyf cam walking prively

In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,

And him sawleth, as she hath don ofte.

A mayde child cam in hir companye, 1285

Which as hir list she may governe and
gye,

For yet under the yerde was the mayde.

O dere cosin myn, daun Iohn,' she
sayde,

What yeleth yow so rathe for to ryse?'

Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough

suffyse 1290

Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night,

But it were for an old appalled wight,

As been thise wedded men, that lye and

daun

As in a forme sit a wery hare,

Were al for-straught with houndes grete

and smale. 1295

But dere nece, why be ye so pale?

trowe certes that our gode man

hath yow laboured sith the night bigan,

That yow were nede to resten hastily?'

And with that word he lough ful merily,

and of his owene thought he wex al

reed. 1301

This faire wyf gan for to shake hir

heed,

and seyde thus, 'ye, god wot al,' quod

she;

Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with

me.

or, by that god that yaf me soule and

lyf, 1305

n al the reme of France is ther no wyf

that lasse lust hath to that sory pley.

or I may singe "allas" and "weyla-

wey,

that I was born," but to no wight,' quod

she,

Dar I nat telle how that it stant with

me. 1310

Wherefore I thinke out of this land to
wende,

Or elles of my-self to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'

This monk bigan up-on this wyf to
stare,

And seyde, 'allas, my nece, god for-
bede 1315

That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,

Fordo your-self; but telleth me your

grief;

Paraventure I may, in your meschief,

Conseille or helpe, and therefore telleth

me

Al yow any, for it shal been secree; 1320

For on my porthors here I make an ooth,

That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,

Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.'

'The same agayn to yow,' quod she,

'I seye;

By god and by this porthors, I yow

swere, 1325

Though men me wolde al in-to peces

tere,

Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,

Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,

Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,

But verraily, for love and affiance.' 1330

Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon

they kiste,

And ech of hem tolde other what hem

liste.

'Cosin,' quod she, 'if that I hadde a

space,

As I have noon, and namely in this

place, 1334

Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf,

What I have suffred sith I was a wyf

With myn housbonde, al be he your

cosyn.'

'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by god and

seint Martyn,

He is na more cosin un-to me

Than is this leef that hangeth on the

tree! 1340

I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of

Fraunce,

To have the more cause of aqueintaunce

Of yow, which I have loved specially

Aboven alle women sikerly;

This swere I yow on my professioun.

Telleth your grief, lest that he come

adoun, 1346

And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.'

'My dere love,' quod she, 'o my daun Iohn,

Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
But out it moot, I may namore abyde.

Myn housbond is to me the worste man
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.

But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
To tellen no wight of our privete,

Neither a bedde, ne in non other place;
God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his
grace! 1356

A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
But al honour, as I can understonde;

Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;
As help me god, he is noight worth at

al 1360

In no degree the value of a flye.

But yet me greveth most his nigardye;
And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly

Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.

They wolde that hir housbondes sholde
be 1365

Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to
free,

And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.
But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,

For his honour, my-self for to arraye,
A Sunday next, I moste nedes paye 1370

An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn.

Yet were me lever that I were unborn

Than me were doon a sclandre or
vileinye;

And if myn housbond eek it mighte
espye,

I nere but lost, and therefore I yow preye
Lene me this somme, or elles moot I

deye. 1376

Daun Iohn, I seye, lene me this hun-
dred frankes;

Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thankes,
If that yow list to doon that I yow

praye.

For at a certain day I wol yow paye,
And doon to yow what plesance and

servyce 1381

That I may doon, right as yow list
devyse.

And but I do, god take on me ven-
geance

As foul as ever had Geniloun of
France!'

This gentil monk answerde in this
manere; 1385

'Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,
I have,' quod he, 'on yow so grect a

routhe,

That I yow swere and plighte yow my
trouthe,

That whan your housbond is to Flaun-
dres fare,

I wol delivere yow out of this care; 1390

For I wol bringe yow an hundred
frankes.'

And with that word he caughte hir by
the flankes,

And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir
ofte.

'Goth now your wey,' quod he, 'al stille
and softe,

And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may;
For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.

Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal
be.'

'Now, elles god forbede, sire,' quod
she,

And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,
And bad the cokes that they sholde hem

hye, 1400

So that men mighte dyne, and that anon.
Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,

And knokketh at his countour boldely.

'*Qui la?*' quod he. 'Peter! it am I,'
Quod she, 'what, sire, how longe wol ye

faste? 1405

How longe tyme wol ye rekene and
caste

Your sommes, and your bokes, and your
thinges?

The devel have part of alle swiche reken-
inges!

Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes
sonde;

Come don to-day, and lat your bagges
stonde. 1410

Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun Iohn
Shal fasting al this day clenge goon?

What! lat us here a messe, and go we
dyne.'

'Wyf,' quod this man, 'litel canstow
devyne

The curious businesse that we have. 1415
For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint

Yve,

Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,
Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.

We may wel make chere and good
visage, 1420

And dryve forth the world as it may be,
And kepen our estaat in privetee,
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfor have I greet necessitee 1425
Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;
For evermore we mote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.

To Flaundres wol I go to-morwe at
day,

And come agayn, as sone as ever I may.
For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke,
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.

Thou hast y-nough, in every maner
wyse, 1435

That to a thrifty houshold may suffyse.
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.
And with that word his countour-dore he
shette,

And doun he gooth, ne lenger wolde he
lette, 1440

But hastily a messe was ther seyde,
And spedily the tables were y-leyde,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;
And richely this monk the chapman
fedde.

At-after diner daun John sobrelly 1445
This chapman took a-part, and prively
He seyde him thus, 'cosyn, it standeth
so,

That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.
God and seint Austin spede yow and
gyde!

I prey yow, cosyn, wysly that ye ryde;
Governe yow also of your diete 1451
Atemprely, and namely in this hete.
Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
Fare-wel, cosyn; god shilde yow fro
care.

If any thing ther be by day or night,
If it lye in my power and my might, 1456
That ye me wol comande in any wyse,
It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.

O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,
I wolde prey yow; for to lene me 1460
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye,

For certein beestes that I moste beye,
To store with a place that is oures.

God help me so, I wolde it were youres!
I shal nat faille surely of my day, 1465
Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.
But lat this thing be secree, I yow
preye,

For yet to-night these beestes moot I
beye;

And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin
dere,

Graunt mercy of your cost and of your
chere.' 1470

This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosin myn, daun
Iohn,

Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
My gold is youres, whan that it yow
leste.

And nat only my gold, but my chaf-
fare; 1475

Take what yow list, god shilde that ye
spare.

But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,
Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir
plogh.

We may creauce whyl we have a name,
But goldlees for to be, it is no game. 1480
Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese;
After my might ful fayn wolde I yow
plese.'

These hundred frankes he fette forth
anon,

And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.
No wight in al this world wiste of this
lone, 1485

Savinge this marchant and daun Iohn
allone.

They drinke, and speke, and rome a
whyle and pleye,
Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.

The morwe cam, and forth this mar-
chant rydeth

To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him
gydeth, 1490

Til he cam in-to Brugges merily.
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaun-
ceth.

He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daun-
ceth;

But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495
He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.

The Sondag next this Marchant was
 agon,
 To Seint Denys y-comen is daun Iohn,
 With crowne and berd all fresh and newe
 y-shave.
 In al the hous ther nas so litel a
 knave, 1500
 Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,
 For that my lord daun Iohn was come
 agayn.
 And shortly to the point right for to gon,
 This faire wyf accorded with daun Iohn,
 That for thise hundred frankes he sholde
 al night 1505
 Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;
 And thise acord parfourned was in dede.
 In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede
 Til it was day, that daun Iohn wente his
 way,
 And bad the meynee 'fare-wel, have good
 day!' 1510
 For noon of hem, ne no wight in the
 toun,
 Hath of daun Iohn right no suspecion.
 And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
 Or where him list; namore of him I seye.
 This marchant, whan that ended was
 the faire, 1515
 To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
 And with his wyf he maketh feste and
 chere,
 And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,
 That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.
 For he was bounde in a reconissaunce 1520
 To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon.
 For which this marchant is to Paris gon,
 To borwe of certein frendes that he
 hadde
 A certein frankes; and somme with him
 he ladde.
 And whan that he was come in-to the
 toun, 1525
 For greet chertee and greet affeccion,
 Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to
 pleye;
 Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
 But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
 And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 1530
 As freendes doon whan they ben met
 y-fere.
 Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery
 chere;
 And he him tolde agayn ful specially,

How he hadde wel y-boght and gra-
 ciously,
 Thanked be god, al hool his marchan-
 dyse. 1535
 Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,
 Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,
 And thanne he sholde been in Ioye and
 reste.
 Daun Iohn answerde, 'certes, I am
 fayn
 That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn. 1540
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
 Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat
 misse,
 For ye so kindly this other day
 Lente me gold; and as I can and may,
 I thanke yow, by god and by seint
 Iame! 1545
 But natheles I took un-to our dame,
 Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn
 Upon your bench; she woot it wel, cer-
 teyn,
 By certein tokenes that I can hir telle.
 Now, by your leve, I may no lenger
 dwelle, 1550
 Our abbot wol out of this toun anon;
 And in his companye moot I gon.
 Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece
 swete,
 And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete!' 1555
 This Marchant, which that was ful war
 and wys,
 Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,
 To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
 The somme of gold, and gat of hem his
 bond;
 And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.
 For wel he knew he stood in swich
 array, 1560
 That nedes moste he winne in that viage
 A thousand frankes above al his costage.
 His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,
 As she was wont of old usage algate,
 And al that night in mirthe they
 bisette; 1565
 For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
 Whan it was day, this marchant gan em-
 brace
 His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir
 face,
 And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.
 'Namore,' quod she, 'by god, ye have
 y-nough!' 1570

And wantounly agayn with him she
pleyde;

Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,
'By god,' quod he, 'I am a litel wrooth
With yow, my wyf, al-though it be me
looth.

And woot ye why? by god, as that I
gesse, 1575

That ye han maad a maner straungenesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn.

Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes
payed

By redy tokene; and heeld him yvel
apayed, 1580

For that I to him spak of chevisaunce,
Me semed so, as by his contenance.

But nathelees, by god our hevене king,
I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.

I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so; 1585
Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,

If any dettour hath in myn absence
Y-payéd thee; lest, thurgh thy negligence,
I mighte him axe a thing that he hath
payed.'

This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed,
But boldely she seyde, and that anon:
'Marie, I defyte the false monk, daun
Iohn!

I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel;
He took me certain gold, that woot I
weel!

What! yvel thedom on his monkes
snoute! 1595

For, god it woot, I wende, withouten
doute,

That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,
To doon ther-with myn honour and my
prow,

For cosinage, and eek for bele chere
That he hath had ful ofte tymes here. 1600

But sith I see I stonde in this disioint,
I wol answeere yow shortly, to the point.
Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!

For I wol paye yow wel and redily
Fro day to day; and, if so be I faille, 1605

I am your wyf; score it up-on my taille,
And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.

For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.

And for I have bistowed it so weel 1610
For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye,

As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and
pleye.

Ye shal my Ioly body have to wedde;
By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.

Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere;
Turne hiderward and maketh bettre
chere.' 1616

This marchant saugh ther was no
remedye,

And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,
Sith that the thing may nat amended be.

'Now, wyf,' he seyde, 'and I foryeve it
thee; 1620

But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large;
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in
charge.'

Thus endeth now my tale, and god us
sende

Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende.
Amen.

Here endeth the Shipmannes Tale.

THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE.

*Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to
the Shipman and to the lady Prioress.*

'WEL seyde, by *corpus dominus*,' quod
our hoste, 1625

'Now longe moot thou sayle by the
coste,

Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad
yeer!

A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a
lape!

The monk putte in the mannes hood an
ape, 1630

And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.

But now passe over, and lat us seke
aboute,

Who shal now telle first, of al this
route,

Another tale;’ and with that word he
sayde, 1635
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
‘My lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,

I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?’
‘Gladly,’ quod she, and seyde as ye
shal here.

Explicit.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale.

Domine, dominus noster.

O LORD our lord, thy name how mer-
veillous
Is in this large worlde y-sprad — quod
she : —
For noght only thy laude precious 1645
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn herynge.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or
may, 1650
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour ;
Not that I may encresen hir honour ;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules
bote. — 1656

O moder mayde ! O mayde moder free !
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses
sighte,
That ravedest doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in
thalighte, 1660
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience,
Help me to telle it in thy reverence !

fy! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee 1665
Ther may no tonge expresse in no sci-
ence ;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,

And getest us the light, thurgh thy
preyere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere. 1670

My conning is so wayk, O blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or
lesse,
That can unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preyre,
Gydeh my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

Here beginneth the Prioresses Tale.

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Iewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde
or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther
were 1686
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen
blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, wher-as he saugh
thimage 1695

Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and
seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone
y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere;
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.
1705

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and
ner, 1710
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Till he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Nocht wiste he what this Latin was to
seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he
preye 1715
Texpounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in
usage;
This preyde he him to construe and
declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than
he, 1720
Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have
herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we
deye.
I can no more expounde in this
matere; 1725
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is
went; 1730

Though that I for my prymer shal be
shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by
rote, 1735
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the
note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he
wente;
On Cristes moder set was his
entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced
so 1745
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple,
allas! 1750
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
In your despyt, and singe of swich
sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han con-
spyred 1755
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Iew him hente and heeld
him faste, 1760
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him
caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe
Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow
availle? 1765
Mordre wol out, certain, it wol nat faille,

And namely ther thonour of god shal
sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed
dede.

'O martir, souted to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in
oon 1770
The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
'Of which the grete evangelist, seint
Iohn,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they
that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al
newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne
knewe.' 1775

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noht;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thought,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him
soght, 1780
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Iewerye.

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir
minde,
To every place wher she hath sup-
posed 1785
By lyklihedde hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and
kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she
wroghte,
Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pit-
ously 1790
To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght
for-by.
They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she
cryde, 1795
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy
might!

This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby
bright, 1800
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete
wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this
thing, 1805
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-outen taryng,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Iewes leet he
binde. 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere
lay; 1815
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth
echon
This provost dooth thise Iewes for to
sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that
anon; 1820
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve.
Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem
drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was
holy water, 1830
And song — '*O Alma redemptoris
mater!*'

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to coniuere he bigan,
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,

In vertu of the holy Trinitee, 1836
Tell me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to myseminge?'

'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of
kinde, 1840

I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe "O Alma" loude and
clere. 1845

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verrailly in my deyinge, 1850
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had
songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on
my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me, 1856
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge
y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."'

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene
I, 1860

His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey
the greyn,

And he yaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot had this wonder
seyn,

His salte teres trikked down as reyn,
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the
grounde, 1865

And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben
went,

And toke away this martir fro his
bere, 1870

And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete;

Ther he is now, god leve us for to
mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed Iewes, as it is notable, 1875
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;

Preye eek for us, we sinful folk un-
stable,

That, of his mercy, god so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,

For reverence of his moder Marye.
Amen. 1880

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

*Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to
Chaucer.*

WHAN seyde was al this miracle, every
man

As sobre was, that wonder was to se,
Til that our hoste Iapen tho bigan,
And than at erst he loked up-on me,
And seyde thus, 'what man artow?'
quod he; 1885

'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an
hare,
For ever up-on the ground I see thee
stare.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.
Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have
place;

He in the waast is shape as wel as I; 1890
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace
For any womman, smal and fair of
face.

He semeth elvish by his contenance,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han
sayd; 1895

Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that
anoon;'

'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel
apayd,
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'

'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul
we here 1900
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his
there.'

Explicit.

SIR THOPAS.

*Here biginneth Chaucer's Tale of
Thopas.*

LISTETH, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of mirthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,
In Flaundes, al biyonde the see,
At Popering, in the place; 1910
His fader was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,
Whyt was his face as payndemayn, 1915
His lippes rede as rose;
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
And I yow telle in good certayn,
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, 1920
That to his girdel raughte adoun;
His shoon of Cordewane.
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,
His robe was of ciclatoun,
That coste many a lane. 1925

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,
With grey goshawk on honde;
Ther-to he was a good archeer,
Of wastling was ther noon his peer, 1930
Ther any ram shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for him, paramour,
Whan hem were bet to slepe;

But he was chast and no lechour, 1935
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde; 1940
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegay,
A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best, 1945
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde almost
Bitid a sory care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The lycorys and cetewale, 1951
And many a clowe-gilofre;
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre. 1955

The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papeiay,
That Ioye it was to here;
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray 1960
She sang ful loude and clere.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked as he were wood:
His faire stede in his prikinge 1965
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For prikinge on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage, 1970

- That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.
- 'O seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
What eyleth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.
- An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make
In toune;
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune!'
- In-to his sadel he clamb anon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf-queen for tespye,
Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,
The contree of Fairye
So wilde;
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne childe.
- Til that ther cam a greet gaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede;
He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt,
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede
With mace.
- Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye
Dwelling in this place.'
- The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay,*
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure;
Thy mawe
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,
For heer thou shalt be slawe.'
- Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This gaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel staf-slinge;
But faire escapeth child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair beringe.
- Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow rounde
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune.
- His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a gaunt with hevedes three,
For paramour and Iolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.
- 'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,
And gestours, for to tellen tales
Anon in myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.'
- They fette him first the swete wyn,
And mede eek in a maselyn,
And royal spicerye
Of gingebred that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,
With sugre that is so trye.
- He dide next his whyte lere
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,
And over that an habergeoun
For percinge of his herte;
- And over that a fyn hauberck,
Was al y-wrought of Iewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.
- His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;

And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!'

His Iambeux were of quirboilly, 2065
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light. 2070

His spere was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;
His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way 2075
Ful softely and rounde
In londe.
Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde. 2080

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle;

Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury 2085
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy, 2090
Of sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
As sparkle out of the bronde; 2095
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He nolde slepen in non hous, 2100
But liggen in his hode;
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by him baiteth his dextrer
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel, 2105
As did the knight sir Percivel,
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day—

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

'No more of this, for goddes dignitee,'
Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me
So wery of thy verray lewednesse 2111
That, also wisly god my soule blesse,
Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;
Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod
he. 2115
'Why so?' quod I, 'why wiltow lette
me
More of my tale than another man,
Sin that it is the beste rym I can?'
'By god,' quod he, 'for pleynly, at a
word,
Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord;
Thou doost nought elles but despendest
tyme, 2121

Sir, at o word, thou shalt no lenger
ryme.
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in
geste,
Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste
In which ther be som mirthe or som doc-
tryne.' 2125
'Gladly,' quod I, 'by goddes swete
pyne,
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose,
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous, 2130
Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.
As thus; ye woot that every evangelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,

Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw
 dooth, 2135
 But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,
 And alle acorden as in hir sentence,
 Al be ther in hir telling difference.
 For somme of hem seyn more, and somme
 lesse, 2139
 When they his pitous passioun expresse;
 I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;
 But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.
 Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,
 If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,
 As thus, thogh that I telle som-what
 more 2145

Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
 Comprehended in this litel tretis here,
 To enforce with the theeffect of my
 matere,
 And thogh I nat the same wordes seye
 As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye,
 Blameth me nat; for, as in my sen-
 tence, 2151
 Ye shul not fynden moche difference
 Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte
 After the which this mery tale I wryte.
 And therfor herkneth what that I shal
 seye, 2155
 And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.'

Explicit.

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

[The mark / denotes the lines.]

*Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of
 Melibee.*

§ 1. A yong man called Melibeus,
 mighty and riche, bigat up-on his
 wyf that called was Prudence, a
 doghter which that called was
 Sophie. /

§ 2. Upon a day bifel that he for
 his desport is went in-to the feeldes
 him to pleye. / His wyf and eek
 his doghter hath he left inwith his
 hous, of which the dores weren fast
 y-shette. / Thre of his olde foos
 han it espyed, and setten laddres to
 the walles of his hous, and by the
 2160 windowes ben entred, / and betten
 his wyf, and wounded his doghter
 with fyve mortal woundes in fyve
 sondry places; / this is to seyn, in
 hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres,
 in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and
 leften hir for deed, and wenten
 away. /

§ 3. When Melibeus retourned
 was in-to his hous, and saugh al
 this meschief, he, lyk a mad man,
 rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe
 and crye. /

§ 4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth
 as she dorste, bisoghte him of his
 weping for to stinte; / but nat for-
 thy he gan to crye and wepen ever
 lenger the more. / 2165

§ 5. This noble wyf Prudence re-
 membered hir upon the sentence of
 Ovide, in his book that cleped is
 The Remedie of Love, wher-as he
 seith; / 'he is a fool that destourb-
 eth the moder to wepen in the deeth
 of hir child, til she have wept hir
 fille, as for a certein tyme; / and
 thanne shal man doon his diligence
 with amiable wordes hir to recon-
 forte, and preyen hir of hir weping
 for to stinte.' / For which resoun
 this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir
 housbond for to wepe and crye as
 for a certein space; / and whan she
 saugh hir tyme, she seyde him in
 this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod
 she, 'why make ye your-self for to
 be lyk a fool? / For sothe, it 2170
 aperteneth nat to a wys man, to
 maken swiche a sorwe. / Your
 doghter, with the grace of god, shal
 warisshe and escape. / And al
 were it so that she right now were

deed, ye ne oghte nat as for
hir deeth your-self to destroye. /
Senek seith: "the wise man shal
nat take to greet discomfort for the
deeth of his children, / but certes
he sholde suffren it in pacience, as
wel as he abyde the deeth of his
owene propre persone." /

2175

§ 6. This Melibeus answerde
anon and seyde, 'What man,' quod
he, 'sholde of his weping stinte,
that hath so greet a cause for to
wepe? / Iesu Crist, our lord, him-
self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus
his freend.' / Prudence answerde,
'Certes, wel I woot, attempree
weping is no-thing defended to him
that sorweful is, amonges folk in
sorwe, but it is rather graunted him
to wepe. / The Apostle Paul un-to
the Romayns wryteth, "man shal
reioyse with hem that maken Ioye,
and wepen with swich folk as
wepen." / But thogh attempree
weping be y-graunted, outrageous

2180

weping certes is defended. / Mes-
sure of weping sholde be considered,
after the lore that techeth us
Senek. / "Whan that thy freend
is deed," quod he, "lat nat thyne
eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to
muche drye; although the teres
come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat
falle." / And whan thou hast for-
goon thy freend, do diligence to
gete another freend; and this is
more wysdom than for to wepe for
thy freend which that thou hast
lorn; for ther-inne is no bote. /
And therefore, if ye governe yow by
sapience, put away sorwe out of
your herte. / Remembre yow that
Iesus Syrak seith: "a man that is
Ioyous and glad in herte, it him
conserveth florissing in his age;
but soothly sorweful herte maketh
his bones drye." / He seith eek

2185

thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth
ful many a man." / Salomon seith:
"that, right as motthes in the shepes
flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the
smale wormes to the tree, right so
anoyeth sorwe to the herte." /

Wherfore us oghte, as wel in the
deeth of our children as in the losse
of our goodes temporels, have
pacience. /

§ 7. Remembre yow up-on the
patient Iob, whan he hadde lost his
children and his temporel substance,
and in his body endured and re-
ceyved ful many a grevous tribu-
lacioun; yet seyde he thus: / "our
lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath
biraft it me; right as our lord hath
wold, right so it is doon; blessed be
the name of our lord." / To this
foreseide thynges answerde Melibeus
un-to his wyf Prudence: 'Alle thy
wordes,' quod he, 'been sothe, and
ther-to profitable; but trewely myn
herte is troubled with this sorwe so
greviously, that I noot what to
done.' / 'Lat calle,' quod Pru-
dence, 'thy trewe freendes alle, and
thy linage whiche that been wyse;
telleth your cas, and herkneth what
they seye in conseiling, and yow
governe after hir sentence. / Sal-
omon seith: "werk alle thy thynges
by conseil, and thou shalt never
repente.'" /

2190

§ 8. Thanne, by the conseil of
his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet
callen a greet congregacioun of
folk; / as surgiens, phisiciens, olde
folk and yonge, and somme of hise
olde enemyes reconciled as by hir
semblaunt to his love and in-to
his grace; / and ther-with-al ther
comen somme of hise neighebores
that diden him reverence more for
drede than for love, as it happeth
ofte. / Ther comen also ful many
subtile flatterers, and wyse advocats
lerned in the lawe. /

2195

§ 9. And whan this folk togidre
assembled weren, this Melibeus in
sorweful wyse shewed hem his cas; /
and by the manere of his speche it
semed that in herte he bar a cruel
ire, redy to doon vengeance up-on
hise foomes, and sodeynly desired that
the werre sholde biginne; / but
natheles yet axed he hir conseil
upon this matere. / A surgien, by

2200

licence and assent of swiche as weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here. /

§ 10. 'Sir,' quod he, 'as to us surgiens aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our pacients that we do no damage; / wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe; / wherfore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre ne parties to supporte. / But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisnesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and sound, as sone as is possible.' / Almost right in the same wyse the phisi-ciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more: / 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe were by vengeance.' / His neighbores, ful of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconsiled, and his flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in praising greetly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wrenken him on his foos and biginne werre. /

§ 11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde: / 'Lordinges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevye thing and an heigh matere, / by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause; / and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe; / for the whiche

resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matere. / Wherfore, Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseilte yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save. / And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as well thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. / Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. / For the commune proverbe seith thus: "he that sone demeth, sone shal repente." / And eek men scyn that thilke Iuge is wys, that sone understondeth a matere and Iuggeth by leyser. / For al-be-it so that alle taryng be anyoful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevinge of Iugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answer, yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. / And by these causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseilte thee thing that shal be profitable.' /

§ 12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wrenken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe;

and with loud voys they cryden,
 'werre! werre!' /

Up roos tho oon of thise olde
 wyse, and with his hand made con-
 tenaunce that men sholde holden
 hem stille and yeven him audience. /
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'ther is ful
 many a man that cryeth "werre!
 werre!" that woot ful litel what
 werre amounteth. / Werre at his
 biginning hath so greet an entree
 and so large, that every wight may
 entre whan him lyketh, and lightly
 finde werre. / But, certes, what
 ende that shal ther-of bifalle, it is
 2230 nat light to knowe. / For sothly,
 whan that werre is ones bigonne,
 ther is ful many a child unborn of
 his moder, that shal sterve yong by-
 cause of that ilke werre, or elles live
 in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. /
 And ther-fore, er that any werre
 biginne, men moste have greet con-
 seil and greet deliberacioun.' / And
 whan this olde man wende to en-
 forcen his tale by resons, wel ny
 alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for
 to breken his tale, and beden him
 ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. /
 For soothly, he that precheth to
 hem that listen nat heren his wordes,
 his sermon hem anoyeth. / For
 Iesus Syrak seith: that "musik in
 wepinge is anoyous thing;" this is
 to seyn: as muche availleth to
 speken bifore folk to whiche his
 speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe
 2235 biforn him that wepeth. / And
 whan this wyse man saugh that him
 wanted audience, al shamefast he
 sette him down agayn. / For Sal-
 omon seith: "ther-as thou ne mayst
 have noon audience, enforce thee
 nat to speke." / 'I see wel,' quod
 this wyse man, 'that the commune
 proverbe is sooth; that "good con-
 seil wanteth whan it is most
 nede."' /

§ 13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in
 his conseil many folk, that prively
 in his ere conseilled him certeyn
 thing, and conseilled him the con-
 trarie in general audience. /

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that
 the gretteste partie of his conseil
 weren accorded that he sholde
 maken werre, anon he consented
 to hir conseilling, and fully affermed
 hir sentence. / Thanne dame Pru- 2240
 dence, whan that she saugh how
 that hir housbonde shoop him for
 to wreken him on his foos, and to
 biginne werre, she in ful humble
 wyse, when she saugh hir tyme,
 seide him thise wordes: / 'My lord,'
 quod she, 'I yow biseche as hertely
 as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat
 to faste, and for alle guerdons as
 yeveth me audience. / For Piers
 Alfonse seith: "who-so that dooth
 to that other good or harm, haste
 thee nat to quyten it; for in this
 wyse thy freend wol abyde, and
 thyn enemy shal the lenger live in
 drede." / The proverbe seith:
 "he hasteth wel that wysely can
 abyde;" and in wikked haste is no
 profit.' /

§ 14. This Melibee answerde
 un-to his wyf Prudence: 'I pur-
 pose nat,' quod he, 'to werke by thy
 conseil, for many causes and resouns.
 For certes every wight wolde holde
 me thanne a fool; / this is to seyn, 2245
 if I, for thy conseilling, wolde
 chaungen thinges that been or-
 deryed and affermed by so manye
 wyse. / Secoundly I seye, that
 alle wommen been wikke and noon
 good of hem alle. For "of a thou-
 sand men," seith Salomon, "I fond
 a good man: but certes, of alle
 wommen, good woman fond I
 never." / And also certes, if I
 governed me by thy conseil, it
 sholde seme that I hadde yeve to
 thee over me the maistrie; and god
 forbode that it so were. / For
 Iesus Syrak seith; "that if the wyf
 have maistrie, she is contrarious to
 hir housbonde." / And Salomon
 seith: "never in thy lyf, to thy wyf,
 ne to thy child, ne to thy freend,
 ne yeve no power over thy-self. For
 bettre it were that thy children aske
 of thy persone thinges that hem

nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the
 2250 handes of thy children." / And
 also, if I wolde werke by thy conseilling,
 certes my conseilling moste som tyme
 be secree, til it were tyme that it moste
 be knowe; and this ne may nought be.
 / [For it is writen, that "the Ianglerie
 of wommen can hyden thinges that they
 witen nought." / Furthermore, the philo-
 sophre seith, "in wikked conseil wommen
 venquisshe men;" and for this resoun
 I ne owe nat usen thy conseil.] /

§ 15. Whanna dame Prudence,
 ful debonairly and with greet patience,
 hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked
 for to seye, thanne axed she of him
 licence for to speke, and seyde in this
 wyse. / "My lord, quod she, 'as to your
 firste resoun, certes it may lightly be
 answered. For I seye, that it is no folie
 to chaunge conseil whan the thing is
 chaunged; or elles whan the thing
 semeth otherweyes than
 2255 it was biforn. / And more-over I seye,
 that though ye han sworn and bihight
 to perfourne your emprise, and natheles
 ye weyve to perfourne thilke same
 emprise by Iuste cause, men sholde
 nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer
 ne forsworn. / For the book seith,
 that "the wyse man maketh no lesing
 whan he turneth his corage to the
 better." / And al-be-it so that your
 emprise be establised and ordeyned by
 greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye
 nat accomlice thilke same ordinaunce
 but yow lyke. / For the trouthe of
 thinges and the profit been rather
 founden in fewe folk that been wyse
 and ful of resoun, than by greet
 multitude of folk, ther every man
 cryeth and clatereth what that him
 lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is
 nat honeste. / As to the seconde
 resoun, where-as ye seyn that "alle
 wommen been wikke," save your
 grace, certes ye despysen alle women
 in this wyse; and "he that alle
 despyseth alle displeseth," as

seith the book. / And Senek seith 2260
 that "who-so wole have sapience,
 shal no man dispreise; but he shal
 gladly techen the science that he can,
 with-outen presumpcioun or pryde. /
 And swiche thinges as he nought ne
 can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne
 hem and enquere of lasse folk than
 him-self." / And sir, that ther hath
 been many a good womman, may
 lightly be preved. / For certes, sir,
 our lord Iesu Crist wolde never have
 descended to be born of a womman,
 if alle wommen hadden ben wikke.
 / And after that, for the grete
 bountee that is in wommen, our lord
 Iesu Crist, whan he was risen fro
 deeth to lyve, appeared rather to a
 womman than to his apostles. / And
 though that 2265 Salomon seith, that "he
 ne fond never womman good," it
 folweth nat therfore that alle
 wommen ben wikke. / For though
 that he ne fond no good womman,
 certes, ful many another man hath
 founden many a womman ful good
 and trewe. / Or elles per-aventure
 the entente of Salomon was this;
 that, as in sovereyn bountee, he
 fond no womman; / this is to seyn,
 that ther is no wight that hath
 sovereyn bountee save god alone;
 as he him-self recordeth in his
 Euaungelie. / For ther nis no
 creature so good that him ne
 wanteth somewhat of the
 perfeccioun of god, that is his
 maker. / Your thridde resoun is 2270
 this: ye seyn that "if ye governe
 yow by my conseil, it sholde seme
 that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie
 and the lordshipe over your persone."
 / Sir, save your grace, it is nat so.
 For if it were so, that no man
 sholde be conseilled but only of
 hem that hadden lordshipe and
 maistrie of his persone, men wolden
 nat be conseilled so ofte. / For
 soothly, thilke man that asketh
 conseil of a purpos, yet hath he
 free chois, wheither he wole
 werke by that conseil or noon. /
 And as to your fourthe resoun,
 ther ye seyn

that "the Ianglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot nocht," as who seith, that "a womman can nat hyde that she woot;" / sir, thise wordes been understonde of wommen that been Iangleresses and wikked; / of whiche wommen, men seyn that "three thinges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves;" / and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that, "it were bettre dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous." / And sir, by your leve, that an nat I; / for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fifte resoun, wher-as ye seyn, that "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" god woot, thilke resoun stant here in no stede. / For understond now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse; / and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; / certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophie that seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquissen hir housbondes." / And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir conceils ful hoolsome and profitable. / Eek som men han seyl, that "the conceillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys." / But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil vile and nocht worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman, and ful discrete and wise in conceillinge. / Lo, Iacob, by good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his

bretheren. / Iulith, by hir good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it. / Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the king, that wolde have slayn him, and apayed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good conceilling. / Hester 2290 by hir good conseil enhaunced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Assuerus the king. / And the same bountee in good conceilling of many a good womman may men telle. / And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat Adam our forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: / "it is nat good to been a man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." / Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir conceils goode and profitable, / our lord god of hevene 2295 wolde never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusoun of man. / And ther seyde ones a clerk in two vers: "what is bettre than gold? Iaspre. What is bettre than Iaspre? Wisdom. / And what is bettre than wisdom? Womman. And what is bettre than a good womman? No-thing." / And sir, by manye of othre resons may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, and hir conceils goode and profitable. / And therfore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your doghter hool and sound. / And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this cause.' / § 16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus: / 'I see wel that the word of Salomon is sooth; he seith, that "wordes that been spoken discreetly by ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they yeven swetnesse to the soule, and hoolsomnesse to the body." / And wyf, by-cause of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete

sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing.' /

§ 17. 'Now sir,' quod dame Prudence, 'and sin ye vouche-sauf to been governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe your-self in chesinge of your
2305 your conseilours. / Ye shul first, in alle your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your conseilour; / and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. / "At alle tymes thou shalt blesse god, and preyre him to dresse thy weyes"; and looke that alle thy conseilors been in him for evermore. / Seint Iame eek seith: "if any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of god." / And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and examine wel your thoughtes, of swich thing as yow thinketh that is best for your
2310 profit. / And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three thinges that been contrariouse to good conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, covetise, and hastifnesse. /

§ 18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-outen ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he may nat do. / And secondly, he that is irous and wroth,
2315 he ne may nat wel deme; / and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseil. / The thridde is this; that "he that is irous and wroth," as seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he blame thinges;" / and with his vicious wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. / And eek sir, ye moste dryve covetise out of your herte. / For the apostle seith, that "covetise is rote of alle harmes." / And trust
2320 wel that a covetous man ne can noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfillle the ende of his covetise; /

and certes, that ne may never be accomplished; for ever the more habundaunce that he hath of richesse, the more he desyreth. / And sir, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastifnesse; for certes, / ye ne may nat deme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte. / For as ye herde bifore, the commune proverbe is this, that "he that sone demeth, sone repenteth." /

§ 19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; / for certes, som thing that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie. /

§ 20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, / thanne rede I yow, that ye kepe it secree. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. / For lesus Syrak
2330 seith: "neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne thy folie; / for they wol yeve yow audiencie and loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence." / Another clerk seith, that "scarsly shaltou finden any persone that may kepe conseil secreely." / The book seith: "whyl that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun; / and whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his
2335 snare." / And therefore yow is better to hyde your conseil in your herte, than praye him, to whom ye han biwreyed your conseil, that he wole kepen it clos and stille. / For Seneca seith: "if so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any other wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?" / But natheless, if thou

wene sikerly that the biwreying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the better plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. / First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente; / for trust wel, that comunly these
 2340 conseilours been flatereres, / namely the conseilours of grete lordes; / for they enforcen hem alway rather to speken plesante wordes, enclynge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. / And therefore men seyn, that "the riche man hath seld good conseil but-if he have it of him-self." / And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyn enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseil-
 2345 ling. / And of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil, as the caas requireth. /

§ 21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that been trewe. / For Salomon seith: that "right as the herte of a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule." / He seith also: "ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend." / For certes, gold
 2350 ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend. / And eek he seith, that "a trewe freend is a strong delfense; who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour." / Thanne shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alway thy conseil of hem that been wyse." / And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseilinges. / For the

book seith, that "in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence." / And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accomplished by strengthe, ne by delivrenesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day." / And thanne
 2355 shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; / for Salomon seith: "manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseilour." / For al-be-it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. / But loke alway that thy conseilours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alway in every nede by oon conseilour allone; for somtyme bihoveth it to been counselled by manye. / For Salomon seith: 2360 "salvaciou of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseilours." /

§ 22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counseilled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseil of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can nocht conseil but after his owene lust and his affecciou." / The book seith: that "the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self." / Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseil of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. / 2365

§ 23. Wherefore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste

is flaterye." And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The book seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee from the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes." / Salomon seith, that "the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents." / He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him." / And therefore seith Tullius: "encline nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye." / And Caton seith: "avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce." / And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseilling of thyne olde enemys that been reconciled. / The book seith: that "no wight retourneth saufully in-to the grace of his olde enemy." / And Isope seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had somtyme werre or enmitee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil." / And Seneca telleth the cause why. "It may nat be," seith he, "that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse." / And therefore seith Salomon: "in thyn olde foo trust never." / For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconciled and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never. / For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre. / And Peter Alfonse seith: "make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in-to wikkednesse." / And eek thou most

eschewe the conseilling of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love. / And therefore seith a philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth." / And Tullius seith: "ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde. / For Salomon seith: "ther is no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse." / Ye shul also han in suspect the conseilling of swich folk as conseille yow a thing prively, and conseille yow the contrarie openly. / For Cassidorie seith: that "it is a maner sleighte to hindre, when he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh prively the contrarie." / Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk. For the book seith: "the conseilling of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude." / And David seith: "blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseilling of shrewes." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype. /

§ 24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, / now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. / In the examininge thanne of your conseilour, ye shul considere manye thinges. / Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt have conseil, that verrey trouthe be seyde and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he that seith fals may nat wel be consailed, in that cas of which he lyeth. / And after

2395 this, thou shalt considere the things that acorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseilours, if resoun accorde therto; / and eek, if thy might may atteine ther-to; and if the more part and the bettre part of thy conseilours acorde ther-to, or no. / Thanne shaltou considere what thing shal folwe of that conseilling; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or damage; and manye othere thinges. / And in alle these thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othere thinges. / Thanne shaltow considere of what rote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. /

2400 Thou shalt eek considere alle these causes, fro whennes they been sprongen. / And whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable, and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; / thanne shaltou considere, if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a good ende. / For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfourne it as him oghte. / Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevye a charge that he mighte nat bere it. / For the proverbe seith: "he that to muche embraceth, distreyneth litel." /

2405 And Catoun seith: "assay to do swich thing as thou hast power to doon, lest that the charge oppresse thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to weyve thing that thou hast bigonne." / And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne. / And Piers Alphonce seith: "if thou hast might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is bettre 'nay' than 'ye';" / this is to seyn, that thee is bettre holde thy tonge stille, than for to speke. / Thanne may ye understonde by strengere resons, that if thou hast power to

parfourne a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it bettre that thou suffre than biginne. / 2410 Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourne it or no. / And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde biforn, and knowen wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende. /

§ 25. Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow whanne, and wherfore, that ye may change your conseil with-outen your repreve. / Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. / For the lawe seith: that "upon thinges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil." / And Senek seith: 2415 "if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyn enemy, change thy conseil." / Thou mayst also change thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by error or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde. / Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, change thy conseil. / For the lawes seyn: that "alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value." / And eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept. / 2420

§ 26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affirmed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked. /

§ 27. This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse. / 'Dame,' quod he, 'as yet in-to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesinge and in the witholdinge of my conseilours. / But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde conde-

scende in especial, / and telle me how lyketh yow, or what semeth yow, by our conseilours that we han chosen in our present nede.' / 2425
 § 28. 'My lord,' quod she, 'I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol nat wilfully replie agayn my resouns, ne destempre your herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese. / For god wot that, as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your profite eke. / And soothly, I hope that your benigntee wol taken it in pacience. / Trusteth me wel,' quod she, 'that your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilung, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye; / in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse. / 2430

§ 29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassenblinge of your conseilours. / For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. / But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anyous for to here. / Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, / ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconciled, and folk that doon yow reverence with-ouen love. / And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; / the whiche three things been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable; / the whiche three things ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as yow oghte. / Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseilours your talent, and your affeccion to make werre anon and for to do vengeance; / 2435

they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. / 2440
 And therefore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by this conseilours only, and with litel avys; / wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and more deliberacioun to parfourne your emprise. / Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseide manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseilours; this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseilours; / ne 2445
 ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre; and ther been ye condescended. / And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, / and therefore the conseil that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapiencie of persones, / ye see wel that in swiche conseilunges foles han the maistrie, / 2450
 Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde: 'I graunte wel that I have erred; / but ther-as thou hast told me heer-biforn, that he nis nat to blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certein caas, and for certein Iuste causes, / I am al redy to change my conseilours, right as thou wolt devyse. / The proverbe seith: that "for to do sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel." /

§ 30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde: / 2455
 'Examineth,' quod she, 'your conseil, and lat us see the whiche of

hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil. / And for-as-muche as that the examinacioun is necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first spoken in this matere. / I sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyde yow in your conseil discreetly, as hem oughte; / and in hir speche seyden ful wysly, that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye; / and, after hir craft, to doon greet diligence un-to the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governaunce. / And sir, right as they han answered wysly and discreetly, / right so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly guerdoned for hir noble speche; / and eek for they sholde do the more ententif bisnesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere. / For al-be-it so that they been your freendes, therefore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght; / but ye oghte the rather guerdone hem and shewe hem your largesse. / And as touchinge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, / that, in maladies, that oon contrarie is warissed by another contrarie, / I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence. / 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I understonde it in this wyse: / that, right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. / For right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong; / and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another.'

§ 31. 'Lo, lo!' quod dame Prudence, 'how lightly is every man enclenyed to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce! / Certes,' quod she, 'the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wyse. / For certes,

wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong; but they been semblable. / And therefore, o vengeaunce is nat warissed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong; / but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth other. / But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wyse: / for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges. / But certes, wikkednesse shal be warissed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. / And heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places. / He seith: "ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; / but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse him that seith to thee harm." / And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord. / But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wyse folk, / that seyden alle by oon accord as ye han herd bifore; / that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous. / And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. / And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone; / ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and devoutly preyen biforn alle thinges, / that Iesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han him in his proteccioun, and been his sovereyn helping at his nede. / For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conselled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. / To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: / "if

god ne kepe the citee, in ydel wak-
 eth he that it kepeth." / Now sir,
 thanne shul ye committe the keping
 of your persone to your trewe
 freendes that been approved and
 2495 y-knowe; / and of hem shul ye
 axen help your persone for to kepe.
 For Catoun seith: "if thou hast
 nede of help, axeit of thy freendes; /
 for ther nis noon so good a phisi-
 cien as thy trewe freend." / And
 after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow
 fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres,
 and have alwey in suspect hir com-
 panye. / For Piers Alfonse seith:
 "ne tak no companye by the weye
 of a straunge man, but-if so be that
 thou have knowe him of a lenger
 tyme. / And if so be that he falle
 in-to thy companye paraventure
 2500 withouten thyn assent, / enquere
 thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of
 his conversacioun and of his lyf bi-
 fore, and feyne thy wey; seye that
 thou goost thider as thou wolt nat
 go; / and if he bereth a spere, hold
 thee on the right syde, and if he
 bere a swerd, hold thee on the list
 syde." / And after this, thanne
 shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle
 swich manere peple as I have seyde
 bifore, and hem and hir conseil es-
 chewe. / And after this, thanne
 shul ye kepe yow in swich manere,
 that for any presumpcioun of your
 strengthe, that ye ne dispyse nat ne
 acounte nat the might of your ad-
 versarie so litel, that ye lete the
 keping of your persone for your
 2505 presumpcioun; / for every wys man
 dredeth his enemy. / And Salo-
 mon seith: "weleful is he that of
 alle hath drede; / for certes, he
 that thurgh the hardinesse of his
 herte and thurgh the hardinesse of
 him-self hath to greet presumpcioun,
 him shal yvel bityde." / Thanne
 shul ye evermore countrewayte em-
 bussgements and alle espaille. /
 For Senek seith: that "the wysc
 man that dredeth harmes escheweth
 2510 harmes; / ne he ne falleth in-to per-
 ils, that perils escheweth." / And al-

be-it so that it seme that thou art in
 siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy
 diligence in kepinge of thy per-
 sone; / this is to seyn, ne be nat nec-
 ligent to kepe thy persone, nat only
 fro thy gretteste enemys but fro thy
 leeste enemy. / Senek seith: "a
 man that is wel avysed, he dredeth
 his leste enemy." / Ovide seith:
 that "the litel wesele wol slee the
 grete bole and the wilde hert." / 2515
 And the book seith: "a litel thorn
 may prikke a greet king ful sore;
 and an hound wol holde the wilde
 boor." / But natheles, I sey nat
 thou shalt be so coward that thou
 doute ther wher-as is no drede. /
 The book seith: that "somme folk
 han greet lust to deceyve, but yet
 they dreden hem to be deceyved." /
 Yet shaltow drede to been empois-
 oned, and kepe yow from the com-
 panye of scorneres. / For the book
 seith: "with scorneres make no
 companye, but flee hir wordes as
 venom." / 2520

§ 32. Now as to the seconde
 point, wher-as your wyse conseil-
 lours consailed yow to warnestore
 your hous with gret diligence, / I
 wolde fayn knowe, how that ye
 understonde thilke wordes, and
 what is your sentence. /

§ 33. Melibeus answerde and
 seyde, 'Certes I understande it in
 this wise; that I shal warnestore
 myn hous with toures, swiche as
 han castelles and othere manere
 edifices, and armure and artel-
 leries, / by whiche thinges I may
 my persone and myn hous so kepen
 and defenden, that myne enemys
 shul been in drede myn hous for to
 approche.' /

§ 34. To this sentence answerde
 anon Prudence; 'warnestoring,'
 quod she, 'of heighe toures and
 of grete edifices apperteneth som-
 tyme to pryde; / and eek men 2525
 make heighe toures and grete edi-
 fices with grete costages and with
 greet travaille; and whan that they
 been accompliced, yet be they nat

worth a stree, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. / And understand wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is / that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise neighebores. / For thus seith Tullius: that "ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquise ne disconforte, and that is, / a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple." /

2530 § 35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; / trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. / For Tullius seith, "in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence." / Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, / er thou biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun. / For Tullius seith: that "long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie." / And Cassidorus seith: "the garnison is stronger when it is longe tyme avysed." /

2540 § 36. But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enemys reconciled, your flatereres / that conseilled yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseilleden yow the contrarie; / the yonge folk also, that conseilleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon. / And certes, sir, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; / which conseilours been y-nogh reprieved by the resouns afore-seyd. But na-

theles, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. / 2545 Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire; / for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, / and how manye trespassours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. / And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. / For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth "consentinge," this is to seyn; / who been they and how manye, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel known whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse; / for trewely, alle tho that conseilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes. / Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes as to your persone. / For 2555 al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. / For certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter; / ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kinrede, / wherfore that your enemys, for drede, sholde stinte to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also, that your riches moten been dispended in diverse parties; / and whan that every 2560 wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth. / But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede; / and, though so were

that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y-nowe to wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone. / And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, / yet natheles your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede; they
 2565 been but litel sib to yow, / and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than youres. / Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it accorde to resoun? / And certes, ye knowe wel "nay." / For as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the Iuge that hath the Iurisdicioun of it, / whan it is graunted him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attempely, as
 2570 the lawe requireth. / And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth "consenting," / thou shalt considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnessse and to thy conseillours. / And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that "nay." / For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich thing as we may doon rightfully. / And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance as of your propre
 2575 auctoritee. / Thanne mowe ye seen, that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnessse. / Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth "consequent." / Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposet for to take is the consequent. / And ther-of folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre; and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. / And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth "engendinge," / thou shalt considere, that
 2580 this wrong which that is doon to

thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; / and of the vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of richesses, as I seyde. /

§ 37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth "causes," which that is the laste point, / thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast received hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. / The fer
 2585 cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges. / The neer cause is thy three enemys. / The cause accidental was hate. / The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. / The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. / The cause final
 2590 was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. / For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, / by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: "selden or with greet peyne been causes y-brought to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne." /

§ 38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answeere as for no sothfastnesse. / For thapostle seith, that
 2595 "the sciences and the Iuggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly." / Natheles, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve / that god, which that is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred

this bityde by Iuste cause resonable. /

2600 § 39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, "a man that drinketh hony." / Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel richesses and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art dronken; and hast forgeten Iesu Crist thy creatour; / thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. / Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith: / "under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule." / And Salomon seith, "if thou hast founden hony, etc of it that suffyseth; / for if thou etc of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be nedy and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thou hast y-trespased. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist; / for certes, 2605 the three enemyes of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessch, the feend, and the world, / thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, / and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places; / this is to seyn, the deedly synnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes. / And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemyes been entred 2610 in-to thyn hous by the windowes, / and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere. /

2615 § 40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemyes; / shewing me the perils and the yvels that mighten falle of this vengeance. / But

who-so wolde considere in alle vengeance the perils and yvels that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, / a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm; / 2620 for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. / And they that han wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours.' / [And to this answerde dame Prudence: 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte wel that of vengeance cometh muchel yvel and muchel good; / but vengeance-takinge aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto Iuges and unto hem that han Iurisdiccoun upon the trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in takinge vengeance of another man, / right so 2625 sinneth the Iuge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han deserved. / For Senek seith thus: "that maister," he seith, "is good that proveth shrewes." / And as Cassidore seith: "A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it displeth to the Iuges and sovereyns." / And another seith: "the Iuge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes." / And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the Romayns: that "the Iuges beren nat the spere with-outen cause;" / but they 2630 beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men. / If ye wol thanne take vengeance of your enemyes, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccoun up-on hem; / and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.' /

§ 41. 'A!' quod Melibee, 'this vengeance lyketh me no-thing. / I bithenke me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me

2635 to passe many a strong pas. /
Now wol I assayen hir, trowinge,
with goddes help, that she shal
helpe me my shame for to venge. /

§ 42. 'Certes,' quod Prudence,
'if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye
shul nat assaye fortune by no wey; /
ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto
hir, after the word of Senek: / for
"things that been folily doon, and
that been in hope of fortune, shullen
never come to good ende." / And
as the same Senek seith: "the
more cleer and the more shyning
that fortune is, the more brotil and

2640 the sonner broken she is." / Trust-
eth nat in hir, for she nis nat stide-
fast ne stable; / for whan thow
trowest to be most seur or siker of
hir help, she wol faille thee and
deceyve thee. / And wher-as ye
seyen that fortune hath norissed yow
fro your childhede, / I seye, that in
so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in
hir and in hir wit. / For Senek
seith: "what man that is norissed
by fortune, she maketh him a greet

2645 fool." / Now thanne, sin ye desyre
and axe vengeance, and the ven-
geance that is doon after the lawe
and bifore the Iuge ne lyketh yow
nat, / and the vengeance that is
doon in hope of fortune is perilous
and uncertein, / thanne have ye
noon other remedie but for to have
your recours unto the sovereyn Iuge
that vengeth alle vileinyes and
wronges; / and he shal venge yow
after that him-self witnesseth, wher-
as he seith: / "leveth the ven-
geance to me, and I shal do it." /

2650 § 43. Melibee answerde, 'if I ne
venge me nat of the vileinye that
men han doon to me, / I sompne
or warne hem that han doon to me
that vileinye and alle othere, to do
me another vileinye. / For it is
writen: "if thou take no ven-
geance of an old vileinye, thou
sompnest thyne adversaries to do
thee a newe vileinye." / And also,
for my suffrance, men wolden do to
me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte

neither bere it ne sustene; / and so
sholde I been put and holden over
lowe. / For men seyn: "in
muchel suffringe shul manye thinges
falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt
nat mowe suffre." /

2655 § 44. 'Certes,' quod Prudence,
'I graunte yow that over muchel
suffraunce nis nat good; / but yet
ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every
persone to whom men doon vileinye
take of it vengeance; / for that
aperteneth and length al only to
the Iuges, for they shul venge the
vileinyes and iniuries. / And ther-
fore tho two auctoritees that ye han
seyd above, been only understonden
in the Iuges; / for whan they suf-
fren over muchel the wronges and
the vileinyes to be doon withouten
punisshinge, / they sompne nat a
man al only for to do newe wronges,
but they comanden it. / Also a
wys man seith: that "the Iuge that
correcteth nat the sinnere comand-
eth and biddeth him do sinne." /
And the Iuges and sovereyns
mighten in hir land so muchel suffre
of the shrewes and misdoeres, /
that they sholden by swich suffrance,
by proces of tyme, wexen of swich
power and might, that they sholden
putte out the Iuges and the sover-
eyns from hir places, / and atte
laste maken hem lesen hir lord-
shipes. /

2660 § 45. But lat us now putte, that
ye have leve to venge yow. / I
seye ye been nat of might and
power as now to venge yow. / For
if ye wole maken comparisoun un-
to the might of your adversaries, ye
shul finde in manye thinges, that I
have shewed yow er this, that hir
condicioun is bettre than yours. /
And therfore seye I, that it is good
as now that ye suffre and be pa-
cient. /

2670 § 46. Forther-more, ye knowen
wel that, after the comune sawe, "it
is a woodnesse a man to stryve with
a strengier or a more mighty man
than he is him-self; / and for

to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril; / and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie." / And therefore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith: "it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf." / And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, / studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. / For Senek seith: that "he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self." / And Catoun seith: "if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre him; / for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe." / Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow. / I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to enclyne to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. / First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene person, / for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyd yow heer-biforn. / For the poete seith, that "we oghte patiently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem." / And Seint Gregorie seith: that "whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier un-to him." / Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe

your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles: / "Iesu Crist," he seith, "hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him; / for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth: / whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght." / Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert or gilt, / oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. / Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. / And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: / "the Ioye of god," he seith, "is perdurable," that is to seyn, everlastinge. / Also troweth and bilereth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. / For Salomon seith: that "the doctrine and the wit of a man is knownen by pacience." / And in another place he seith: that "he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence." / And the same Salomon seith: "the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth." / He seith also: "it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong; / and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees." / And therefore seith seint Iame in his epistle: that "pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun." /

§ 47. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfec-

cioun; / but every man may nat
 have the perfeccioun that ye seken; /
 ne I nam nat of the nombre of right
 2710 parfite men, / for myn herte may
 never been in pees un-to the tyme
 it be venged. / And al-be-it so
 that it was greet peril to myne ene-
 mys, to do me a vileinye in takinge
 vengeance up-on me, / yet token
 they noon hede of the peril, but ful-
 filleden hir wikked wil and hir cor-
 age. / And therfore, me thinketh
 men oghten nat repreve me, though
 I putte me in a litel peril for to venge
 me, / and though I do a greet excesse,
 2715 oon outrage by another.' /

§ 48. 'A!' quod dame Prudence,
 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyk-
 eth; / but in no caas of the world
 a man sholde nat doon outrage ne
 excesse for to vengen him. / For
 Cassidore seith: that "as yvel doth
 he that vengeth him by outrage, as
 he that doth the outrage." / And
 therfore ye shul venge yow after the
 ordre of right, that is to seyn by the
 lawe, and noght by excesse ne by
 outrage. / And also, if ye wol
 venge yow of the outrage of your
 adversaries in other maner than
 2720 right comandeth, ye sinnen; / and
 therfore seith Senek: that "a man
 shal never vengen shrewednesse by
 shrewednesse." / And if ye seye,
 that right axeth a man to defenden
 violence by violence, and fighting
 by fighting, / certes ye seye sooth,
 whan the defense is doon anon with-
 outen intervalle or with-outen tary-
 ing or delay, / for to defenden him
 and nat for to vengen him. / And
 it bihoveth that a man putte swich
 2725 attemperance in his defence, / that
 men have no cause ne matere to
 repreven him that defendeth him
 of excesse and outrage; for elles
 were it agayn resoun. / Pardee,
 ye knowen wel, that ye maken no
 defence as now for to defende yow,
 but for to venge yow; / and so
 seweth it that ye han no wil to do
 your dede attemprely. / And ther-

fore, me thinketh that pacience is
 good. For Salomon seith: that
 "he that is nat pacient shal have
 greet harm." /

§ 49. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I
 graunte yow, that whan a man is
 impacient and wroth, of that that
 toucheth him noght and that aper-
 teneth nat un-to him, though it
 harme him, it is no wonder. / For
 2730 the lawe seith: that "he is coupable
 that entremetteth or medleth
 with swich thyng as aperteneth nat
 un-to him." / And Salomon seith:
 that "he that entremetteth him of
 the noyse or stryf of another man,
 is lyk to him that taketh an hound
 by the eres." / For right as he
 that taketh a straunge hound by
 the eres is outhewhyle biten with
 the hound, / right in the same wyse
 is it resoun that he have harm, that
 by his impacience medleth him of
 the noyse of another man, wher-as
 it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But
 ye knowen wel that this dede, that
 is to seyn, my grief and my disese,
 toucheth me right ny. / And ther-
 2735 fore, though I be wroth and inpa-
 cient, it is no merveille. / And
 savinge your grace, I can nat seen
 that it mighte greetly harme me
 though I toke vengeance; / for I
 am richer and more mighty than
 myne enemys been. / And wel
 knowen ye, that by moneye and by
 havinge grete possessions been all
 the thinges of this world governed. /
 And Salomon seith: that "alle thinges
 obeyen to moneye." /

§ 50. Whan Prudence hadde herde
 hir housbonde avanten him of his
 richesse and of his moneye, dis-
 preisinge the power of hise adversa-
 ries, she spak, and seyde in this
 wyse: / 'certes, dere sir, I graunte
 yow that ye been rich and mighty, /
 and that the riches been goode to
 hem that han wel y-geten hem and
 wel conne usen hem. / For right
 as the body of a man may nat liven
 with-oute the soule, namore may it
 live with-outen temporel goodes. /

2745 And by richesses may a man gete him grete freendes. / And therefore seith Pamphilles: "if a netherdes doghter," seith he, "be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; / for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir." / And this Pamphilles seith also: "if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. / And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewell freendshipe and felaweshipe; / for thou shalt be allone with-outen any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk." / And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: that "they that been thralle and bonde of linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the richesses." / And right so as by richesses ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverte come ther manye harmes and yveles. / For greet poverte constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. / And therefore clepeth Cassidore poverte "the moder of ruine," / that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge down. / And therefore seith Piers Alfonce: "oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is / whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverte to eten the almesse of his enemy." / And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that "sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; / for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth

2755 him to axe." / And therefore seith Salomon: that "bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverte." / And as the same Salomon seith: "bette it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse." / By thise resons that I have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, / I graunte

yow that richesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho richesses. / And therefore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul bere yow in gaderinge of richesses, and in what manere ye shul usen hem. / 2755

§ 51. First, ye shul geten hem with-outen greet desyr, by good leyser sokingly, and nat over hastily. / For a man that is to desyringe to gete richesses abaundoneth him first to thefte and to alle other yveles. / And therefore seith Salomon: "he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent." / He seith also: that "the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, some and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; / but that richesse that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth." / And 2770

2775 sir, ye shul geten richesses by your wit and by your travaille un-to your profit; / and that with-outen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. / For the lawe seith: that "ther maketh no man himselfen riche, if he do harm to another wight;" / this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another persone. / And Tullius seith: that "no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne no-thing that may falle un-to a man / is so muchel agayns nature, 2775

as a man to encessen his owene profit to the harm of another man. / And though the grete men and the mighty men geten richesses more lightly than thou, / yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt in alle wyse flee ydelnesse." / For Salomon seith: that "ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles." / And the same Salomon seith: that "he that travailleth and bisieeth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed; / but he that 2780

is ydel and casteth him to no bisinesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in-to poverte, and dye for hun-

ger." / And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. / For ther is a versifiour seith: that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." / For these causes seith Caton: "waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe; for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices." / And therfore seith seint Ierome: "doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied." / For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes." /

§ 52. Thanne thus, in getinge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. / And afterward, ye shul use the riches, whiche ye have geten by your wit and by your travaille, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. / For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, / in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely. / And therfore seith Caton: "use," he seith, "thy riches that thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche; / for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." / He seith also: "the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; / for they that folly wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, / whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul flee avarice; / usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, / but that ye have

hem in your might and in your weeldinge. / For a wys man repreveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers: / "wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye; / for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf." / And for what cause or enchesoun Ioyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, / that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes; / and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. / And therfore seith seint Augustin: that "the avaricious man is likned un-to helle; / that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure." / And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, / as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. / Therfore seith Tullius: "the goodes," he seith, "of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee;" / that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; / "ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes." / Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge hem, ye shul alwey have three things in your herte; / that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. / First, ye shul have god in your herte; / and for no riches ye shullen do no-thing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker. / For after the word of Salomon: "it is better to have a litel good with the love of god, / than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god." / And the prophete seith: that "better it is to been a good

man and have litel good and tre-
 2820 sour, / than to been holden a
 shrewe and have grete richesse." /
 And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye
 sholde alwey doon your bisnesse to
 gete yow riches, / so that ye gete
 hem with good conscience. / And
 thaPOSTle seith: that "ther nis
 thing in this world, of which we
 sholden have so greet Ioye as whan
 our conscience bereth us good
 witesse." / And the wyse man
 seith: "the substance of a man is
 ful good, whan sinne is nat in
 2825 mannes conscience." / Afterward,
 in getinge of your riches, and in
 usinge of hem, / yow moste have
 greet bisnesse and greet dili-
 gence, that your goode name be
 alwey kept and conserved. / For
 Salomon seith: that "bette it is
 and more it availeth a man to have
 a good name, than for to have grete
 riches." / And therefore he
 seith in another place: "do greet
 diligence," seith Salomon, "in kep-
 inge of thy frend and of thy gode
 name: / for it shal lenger abide
 with thee than any tresour, be it
 2830 never so precious." / And certes
 he sholde nat be called a gentil
 man, that after god and good
 conscience, alle thinges left, ne dooth
 his diligence and bisnesse to kepen
 his good name. / And Cassidore
 seith: that "it is signe of a gentil
 herte, whan a man loveth and
 desyareth to han a good name." /
 And therefore seith seint Augustin:
 that "ther been two thinges that
 arn necessarie and nedefulle, / and
 that is good conscience and good
 loos; / that is to seyn, good con-
 science to thyn owene persone in-
 ward, and good loos for thy
 2835 neigebore outward." / And he
 that trusteth him so muchel in his
 gode conscience, / that he dis-
 pleseth and setteth at noight his
 gode name or loos, and rekketh
 noight though he kepe nat his gode
 name, nis but a cruel cherl. /

§ 53. Sire, now have I shewed

yow how ye shul do in getinge
 riches, and how ye shullen usen
 hem; / and I se wel, that for the
 trust that ye han in youre riches,
 ye wole moeve werre and bataille. /
 I conseilte yow, that ye biginne no
 werre in trust of your riches;
 for they ne suftysen noight werres to
 mayntene. / And therefore seith a 2840
 philosopre: "that man that desy-
 reth and wole algates han werre,
 shal never have suffisaunce; / for
 the richer that he is, the gretter
 despenses moste he make, if he
 wole have worship and victorie." /
 And Salomon seith: that "the
 gretter riches that a man hath,
 the mo despendours he hath." /
 And dere sire, al-be-it so that for
 your riches ye mowe have muchel
 folk, / yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is
 nat good, to biginne werre, where-
 as ye mowe in other manere have
 pees, un-to your worship and
 profit. / For the victories of bat- 2845
 ailles that been in this world, lyen
 nat in greet nombre or multitude of
 the peple ne in the vertu of man; /
 but it lyth in the wil and in the
 hand of our lord god almighty. /
 And therefore Iudas Machabeus,
 which was goddes knight, / whan
 he sholde fighte agayn his adver-
 sarie that hadde a greet nombre,
 and a gretter multitude of folk and
 strengre than was this peple of
 Machabee, / yet he reconforted his
 litel compaignie, and seyde right in
 this wyse: / "als lightly," quod he, 2850
 "may our lord god almighty yeve
 victorie to a fewe folk as to many
 folk; / for the victorie of bataile
 cometh nat by the grete nombre of
 peple, / but it cometh from our lord
 god of hevenc." / And dere sir,
 for as muchel as there is no man
 certein, if he be worthy that god
 yeve him victorie, [namore than he
 is certein whether he be worthy of
 the love of god] or naught, after
 that Salomon seith, / therefore every
 man sholde greetly drede werres to
 biginne. / And by-cause that in 2855

batailles fallen manye perils, / and happeth outhere-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the litel man; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, "the dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne; / for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another." / And for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. / For Salomon seith: "he that loveth peril shal falle in peril." /

§ 54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere, Melibee answerde and seyde, / "I see wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and by your reasons that ye han shewed me, that the werre lyketh yow no-thing; / but I have nat yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede." /

§ 55. 'Certes,' quod she, 'I conseilte yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. / For seint Iame seith in hise epistles: that "by concord and pees the smale richesses wexen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete richesses fallen doun." / And ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and most sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. / And therfore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hise apostles in this wyse: / "wel happy and blessed been they that loven and purchacen pees; for they been called children of god." / "A!" quod Melibee, 'now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne my worshipec. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; / and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconciled. / Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? / For sothe, that were nat my worship. / For right as men seyn, that "over-greet hom-

linesse engendreth dispreysinge," so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.' /

§ 56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, / "certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon; / ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. / And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. / For the wyse man seith: "the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconciling bi-ginneth by thy-self." / And the prophete seith: "flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; / seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is." / Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; / for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. / And Salomon seith: "he that hath over-hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde." /

§ 57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, / "dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeyd of thinges that I seye; / for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; / and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. / Therefore the prophete seith: that "troubled eyen han no cleer sighte." / But seyeth and conseileth me as yow lyketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre; / and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. / For Salomon seith: that "he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes." /

§ 58. Thanne seide dame Pru-

dence, 'I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith: "he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, / than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye." / And this same Salomon seith afterward: that "by the sorweful visage of a man," that is to seyn, by the sory and hevye countenance of a man, / "the fool correcteth and amendeth himself." /

2900 § 59. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'I shal nat conne answeere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. / Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfillle and parfourne it.' /

2905 § 60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, / 'I conseilte yow,' quod she, 'aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconciled un-to him and to his grace. / For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. / And if ye do as I sey yow, god wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, / and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements. / For Salomon seith: "whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, / he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and of grace." / And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in privee place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. / And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte yow the more seurlly.' /

2915 § 61. 'Dame,' quod Melibee, 'dooth your wil and your lykinge, / for I putte me hoolly in your disposicion and ordinaunce.' /

§ 62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her

housbonde, delibered and took avys in hir-self, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. / And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for these adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, / and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; / and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughthe have greet repentaunce / of the iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter. /

2920 § 63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, / they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so greet Ioye of hir, that wonder was to telle. / 'A! lady!' quod they, 'ye han shewed un-to us "the blessinge of swetnesse," after the sawe of David the prophete; / for the reconcilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, / but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee, / ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. / Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful trewe; / for he seith: that "swete wordes multiplen and encresen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke." /

2930 § 64. 'Certes,' quod they, 'we putten our dede and al our matere and cause al hoolly in your goode wil; / and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And therefore, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, / that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes; / for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure; / so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken hise

amendes. / And therefore we oblige
and binden us and our freendes to
doon al his wil and hise comande-
ments. / But peraventure he hath
swich hevynesse and swich wratthe
to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, /
that he wole enioyne us swich a
peyne as we mowe nat bere ne suste-
ne. / And therefore, noble lady,
we biseke to your wommanly
2940 pitee, / to taken swich avysement
in this nede, that we, ne our
freendes, be nat desherited ne
destroyed thurgh our folye.' /

§ 65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence,
'it is an hard thing and right peril-
ous, / that a man putte him al
outrely in the arbitracioun and
Iuggement, and in the might and
power of hise enemys. / For Salo-
mon seith: "leveth me, and yeveth
credence to that I shal seyn; I
seye," quod he, "ye peple, folk,
and governours of holy chirche, /
to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy
freend, ne to thy brother / ne yeve
thou never might ne maistrice of thy
body, whyl thou livest." / Now
sithen he defendeth, that man shal
nat yeven to his brother ne to his
freend the might of his body, / by
a strengre resoun he defendeth and
forbedeth a man to yeven him-self
to his enemy. / And natheles I
conseille you, that ye mistruste nat
my lord. / For I woot wel and
knowe verraily, that he is debonaire
2950 and meke, large, curteys, / and
nothing desyrous ne covetous of
good ne richesse. / For ther nis
no-thing in this world that he
desyreth, save only worship and
honour. / Forther-more I knowe
wel, and am right seur, that he shal
no-thing doon in this nede with-
outen my conseil. / And I shal so
werken in this cause, that, by grace
of our lord god, ye shul been recon-
siled un-to us.' /

§ 66. Thanne seyden they with o
vois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us
and our goodes al fully in your wil
2955 and disposicioun; / and been redy

to comen, what day that it lyke
un-to your noblesse to limite us or
assigne us, / for to maken our obli-
gacioun and bond as strong as it
lyketh un-to your goodnesse; /
that we mowe fullille the wille of
yow and of my lord Melibee.' /

§ 67. Whan dame Prudence
hadde herd the answeres of thise
men, she bad hem goon agayn
prively; / and she retourned to hir
lord Melibee, and tolde him how she
fond hise adversaries ful repentant, / 2960
knowleching ful lowely hir sinnes
and trespas, and how they were
redy to suffren al peyne, / requir-
inge and preyinge him of mercy and
pitee. /

§ 68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he
is wel worthy to have pardoun and
foryifnesse of his sinne, that ex-
cuseth nat his sinne, / but know-
lecheth it and repenteth him, axinge
indulgence. / For Senek seith:
"ther is the remissioun and foryif-
nesse, where-as confessioun is;" / 2965
for confession is neighebre to inno-
cence. / And he seith in another
place: "he that hath shame for his
sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy
remissioun." And therefore I as-
sente and conferme me to have
pees; / but it is good that we do
it nat with-outen the assent and wil
of our freendes.' /

§ 69. Thanne was Prudence right
glad and Ioyeful, and seyde, /
'Certes, sir,' quod she, 'ye han wel
and goodly answered. / For right 2970
as by the conseil, assent, and help
of your freendes, ye han been stired
to venge yow and maken werre, /
right so with-outen hir conseil shul
ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees
with your adversaries. / For the
lawe seith: "ther nis no-thing so
good by wey of kinde, as a thing to
been unbounde by him that it was
y-bounde.'" /

§ 70. And thanne dame Prude-
nce, with-outen delay or taryinge,
sente anon hir messages for hir kin,
and for hir olde freendes whiche

that were trewe and wyse, / and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is
 2975 aboven expressed and declared; / and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. / And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, / and hadden examined it by greet bisinesse and greet diligence, / they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; / and that Melibee sholde receyve
 2980 with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy. /

§ 71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, / accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, / she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and seyde: / 'ther is an old proverbe,' quod she, 'seith: that "the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it; / and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til
 2985 to-morwe." / And therefore I conseilte that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, / un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, / that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, / that they shape hem, with-outen delay or taryng, to comen un-to us.' / Which thing parfourned
 2990 was in dede. / And whanne these trespassours and repentine folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, / hadden herd what these messagers seyden un-to hem, / they weren right glad and loyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, / yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; / and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee. /
 2995

§ 72. And right anon they token hir way to the court of Melibee, / and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for

hem and for to been hir borwes. / And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem these wordes: / 'it standeth thus,' quod Melibee, 'and sooth it is, that ye, / causeless, and with-outen skile and resoun, / han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. / For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, / and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth; / and therefore wol I knowe and wite of yow, / whether ye wol putte the punissement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?' /
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 3005

§ 73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and seyde: / 'sire,' quod he, 'we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. / For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, / that trewely we han deserved the deeth. / But yet, for the grete goodnesse and debonair-ete that all the world witnesseth of your persone, / we submitten us to
 3010 the excellence and benignitee of your gracious lordshipe, / and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; / bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol considere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, / and graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence. / For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy stretchen hem ferther in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageous giltes and trespas in-to wickednesse; / al-be-it that cursedly
 3015 and dampnably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.' /

§ 74. Thanne Melibee took hem up for the ground ful benignely, / and receyved hir obligaciouns and

hir bondes by hir othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne un-to his court, / for to accepte and receyve the sentence and Iugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd; / whiche thinges ordeyned, every man returned to his hous. /

§ 75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, / what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries? /

§ 76. To which Melibee answered and seyde, 'certes,' quod he, 'I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exile for ever.' /

§ 77. 'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun. / For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good; / and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a covetous name, / which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: "covetise is rote of alle harmes." / And therefore, it were

bettere for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For bettere it is to lesen good with worshippe, than it is to winne good with vileinye and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his businesse to geten him a good name. / And yet shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, / but he shal also enforcen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may renovelle his good

name; / for it is written, that "the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renovelled." / And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole exile your adversaries, / that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, / considered the

power that they han yewe yow up-on hem-self. / And it is written, that "he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him." / And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that peyne by right and by lawe, / which I trowe ye mowe nat do, / I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. / And therefore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly; / this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy sentences and Iugements. / For it is written, that "he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen." / And therefore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. / For Senek seith: that "he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes." / And Tullius seith: "ther is no-thing so comendable in a greet lord / as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him lightly." / And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, / in swich a manere, that your goode name may be kept and conserved; / and that men mowe have cause and matere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy; / and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. / For Senek seith: "he overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie." / Wherefore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theeffect and entente that god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste Iugement. / For seint Iame seith in his epistle: "Iugement withouten mercy shal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight." /

§ 78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, / his herte gan encline to the wil of his wyf,

consideringe hir trewe entente; /
and conformed him anon, and as-
sented fully to werken after hir con-
seil; / and thonked god, of whom
procedeth al vertu and alle good-
nesse, that him sente a wyf of so
greet discrecioun. / And whan the
day cam that hise adversaries sholde
apperen in his presence, / he spak
unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in
3065 this wyse: / 'al-be-it so that of your
pryde and presumpcioun and folie,
and of your negligence and uncon-
ninge, / ye have misborn yow and
trespassed un-to me; / yet, for as
much as I see and biholde your grete
humilitee, / and that ye been sory
and repentant of your giltes, / it

constreyneth me to doon yow grace
and mercy. / Therefore I receyve 3070
yow to my grace, / and foryeve yow
outruly alle the offences, iniuries,
and wronges, that ye have doon
agayn me and myne; / to this effect
and to this ende, that god of his
endelees mercy / wole at the tyme
of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes
that we han trespassed to him in
this wrecched world. / For doute-
lees, if we be sory and repentant of
the sinnes and giltes whiche we han
trespassed in the sighte of our lord
god, / he is so free and so merci- 3075
able, / that he wole foryeven us our
giltes, / and bringen us to his blisse
that never hath ende. Amen.' /

Here is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee and of Dame Prudence.

THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

*The mery wordes of the Host to the
Monk.*

WHAN ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and hir benignitee, 3080
Our hoste seyde, 'as I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this
tale! 3084
For she nis no-thing of swich pacience
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
By goddes bones! whan I bete my
knaves,
She bringth me forth the grete clobbed
staves,
And cryeth, "slee the dogges everich-
oon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every
boon." 3090
And if that any neighber of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf encline,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth
in my face,
And cryeth, "false coward, wreak thy
wyf, 3095

By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go
spinne!"
Fro day to night right thus she wol bi-
ginne; —
"Allas!" she seith, "that ever I was
shape 3099
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape,
That wol be overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves
right!"
This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I 3105
Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighber, and thanne go my wey.
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde,
For she is big in armes, by my feith, 3111
That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or
seith.
But lat us passe away fro this matere.
My lord the Monk,' quod he, 'be mery
of chere;
For ye shul telle a tale trewely. 3115
Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!

Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our
game,
But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your
name,
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan Iohn,
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon? 3120
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?
I vow to god, thou hast a ful fair skin,
It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;
Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.
Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister whan thou art at
hoom;
No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,
But a governour, wyly and wys. 3130
And therwithal of brawnes and of bones
A wel-faring persone for the nones.
I pray to god, yeve him confusioun
That first thee broghte un-to religioun;
Thou woldest han been a trede-foul
aright. 3135
Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast
might
To parfourne al thy lust in engen-
drure,
Thou haddest bigeten many a creature.
Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
God yeve me sorwe! but, and I were a
pope, 3140
Not only thou, but every mighty man,
Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his
pan,
Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is
lorn!
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of treading, and we borel men ben
shrimpes! 3145
Of feble trees ther comen wrecched
impes.
This maketh that our heires been so
sclendir

And feble, that they may nat wel engen-
dre.

This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye
Of Venus payements than mowe we; 3151
God woot, no lussheburghes paven ye!
But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I
pleye;

Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd
seye.' 3154

This worthy monk took al in pacience,
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
As fer as souneth in-to honestee,
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.
And if yow list to herkne hiderward,
I wol yow seyn the lyf of saint Edward;
Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle 3161
Of whiche I have an hundred in my
celle.

Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bokes maken us memorie,
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree 3166
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
And they ben versifyed comunly
Of six feet, which men clepe *exametron*.
In prose eek been endyted many oon,
And eek in metre, in many a sondry
wyse. 3171
Lo! this declaring oughte y-nough suf-
fise.

Now herkne, if yow lyketh for to
here;
But first I yow biseke in this matere,
Though I by ordre telle nat these
thinges, 3175
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men writen finde,
But telle hem som bifore and som bi-
hinde,
As it now comth un-to my remem-
braunce; 3179
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.'

Explicit.

THE MONKES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, de
Casibus Virorum Illustrium.*

I WOL biwayle in maner of Tragedie
The harm of hem that stode in heigh
degree,
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;
For certain, whan that fortune list to
flee, 3185
Ther may no man the cours of hir with-
holde;
Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and
olde.

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
And nat a man, at him I wol biginne;
For, thogh fortune may non angel dere,
From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne
Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat
twinne 3195
Out of miserie, in which that thou art
falle.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,
With goddes owene finger wroght was
he,
And nat bigeten of mannes sperme un-
clene,
And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200
Had never worldly man so heigh degree
As Adam, til he for misgovernance
Was drive out of his hye prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to mes-
chaunce.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat
By thangel, longe er his nativitee, 3206
And was to god almighty consecrat,
And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte
see.

Was never swich another as was he,
To speke of strengthe, and therewith
hardnesse; 3210
But to his wyves tolde he his secree,
Through which he slow him-self, for
wrecchednesse.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,
He slow and al to-rente the leoun, 3215
Toward his wedding walking by the
weye.
His false wyf coude him so plese and
preye
Til she his foos his conseil knew, and she untrew
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwrewe,
And him forsook, and took another
newe. 3220

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for
ire,
And alle hir tayles he togider bond,
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
For he on every tayl had knit a brond;
And they brende alle the cornes in that
lond, 3225
And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek,
A thousand men he slow eek with his
hond,
And had no wepen but an asses cheek.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him
that he
Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to
preye 3230
That god wolde on his peyne han som
pitee,
And sende him drinke, or elles moste he
deye;
And of this asses cheke, that was drewe,
Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to
seye, 3235
Thus heelp him god, as *Iudicum* can telle.

By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up-plaint,
And on his bak y-caried hem hath he

Hye on an hille that men mighte hem
see. 3241

O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,
Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,
In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn,
Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne
shere, 3246

By precept of the messager divyn,
For alle his strengthes in his heres were;
And fully twenty winter, yeer by yere,
He hadde of Israel the gouernaunce.

But sone shal he wepen many a tere, 3251
For wommen shal him bringen to mes-
chaunce!

Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay,
And falsly to his fo-men she him solde.
And sleping in hir barme up-on a day
She made to clippe or shere his heer
away, 3257

And made his fo-men al his craft espyen;
And whan that they him fonde in this
array,

They bounde him faste, and putten out
his yën. 3260

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave,
Ther was no bond with which men might
him binde;

But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
Wher-as they made him at the querne
grinde.

O noble Sampson, strongest of man-
kinde, 3265

O whylom Iuge in glorie and in richesse,
Now maystow wepen with thyn yën
blinde,

Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecched-
nesse.

Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye;
His fo-men made a feste upon a day, 3270
And made him as hir fool bfore hem
pleye,

And this was in a temple of greet array.
But atte laste he made a foul affray;
For he two pilers shook, and made hem
falle,

And down fil temple and al, and ther it
lay, 3275

And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men
alle.

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,
And eek three thousand bodies wer ther
slayn

With falling of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn.

Beth war by this ensample old and
playn 3281

That no men telle hir conseil til hir
wywes

Of swich thing as they wolde han secree
fayn,

If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour
Singen his workes laude and heigh re-
noun; 3286

For in his tyme of strengthe he was the
flour.

He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun;
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;

He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes
felle; 3290

He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of
helle:

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,
And made his hors to frete him, flesh
and boon;

He slow the firy serpent venimous; 3295
Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon;

And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;

He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,
And bar the heven on his nekke
longe. 3300

Was never wight, sith that the world
bigan,

That slow so many monstres as dide he.
Thurgh-out this wyde world his name
ran,

What for his strengthe, and for his heigh
bountee,

And every reaume wente he for to
see. 3305

He was so strong that no man mighte
him lette;

At bothe the worldes endes, seith Tro-
phee,
In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
That highte Dianira, fresh as May; 3310
And, as thise clerkes maken menciou, she
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.
Allas! this sherte, allas and weylaway!
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a
day, 3315
It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

But natheles somme clerkes hir excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as be may, I wol hir nought accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al
naked, 3320
Til that his flesh was for the venim
blaked.

And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deynd him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules;
Lo, who may truste on fortune any
throwe? 3326
For him that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to
glose, 3330
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor,
With tonge unnethe may discryved be.
He twyes wan Ierusalem the citee;
The vessel of the temple he with him
ladde.

At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his deylt he
hadde. 3340

The fairest children of the blood royal
Of Israel he lect do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his
thral.

Amonges othere Daniel was oon, 3344
That was the wysest child of everichoon;
For he the dremes of the king expouned,
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther
noon

That wiste to what fyn his dremes
souned.

This proude king leet make a statue of
golde, 3349
Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede,
To which image bothe yonge and olde
Comaunded he to loute, and have in
drede;

Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede
He shal be brent, that wolde nought
obeye. 3354

But never wolde assente to that dede
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proud was and claat,
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat:
But sodeynly he loste his dignitee, 3360
And lyk a beste him semed for to be,
And ect hay as an oxe, and lay ther-
oute;

In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,
Til certein tyme was y-come aboute.

And lyk an egles fetheres waxe his
heres, 3365
His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were;
Til god relessed him a certein yeres,
And yaf him wit; and than with many a
tere

He thanked god, and ever his lyf in
fere

Was he to doon amis, or more trespace,
And, til that tyme he leyd was on his
bere, 3371

He knew that god was ful of might and
grace.

BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR)

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,
That heeld the regne after his fader
day, 3374

He by his fader coude nought be war,
For proud he was of herte and of array;
And eek an ydolastre was he ay.
His hie estaat assured him in pryde.

But fortune caste him doun, and ther he
lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divyde. 3380

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle
Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,
And than his officeres gan he calle —
'Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,' [tho]
quod he, 3384
'Which that my fader, in his prosperitee,
Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,
And to our hyc goddes thanke we
Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.'

His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes
Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste,
Out of this noble vessels sundry wyne;
And on a wal this king his yēn caste,
And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful
faste,
For fere of which he quook and syked
sore. 3394

This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste,
Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.

In al that lond magicien was noon
That coude expoune what this lettre
mente;
But Daniel expouned it anoon, 3399
And seyde, 'king, god to thy fader lente
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente:
And he was proud, and no-thing god ne
dradde,
And therfor god gret wreche up-on him
sente,
And him birafte the regne that he
hadde.

He was out cast of mannes companye,
With asses was his habitacioun, 3406
And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,
Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
That god of heven hath dominacioun
Over every regne and every creature;
And thanne had god of him compassioun,
And him restored his regne and his
figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud
also,
And knowest alle thise thinges verrailly,
And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415
Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely;

Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully
Dronke of the same vessels sondry wyne,
And heriest false goddes cursedly;
Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne
is. 3420

This hand was sent from god, that on
the walle

Wroot *mane, techel, phares*, truste me;
Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at
alle;

Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Perses yeven,' quod he.
And thilke same night this king was
slawe,
And Darius occupyeth his degree,
Thogh he therto had neither right ne
lawe.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye
take 3429

How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse;
For whan fortune wol a man forsake,
She bereth away his regne and his
richesse,

And eek his freendes, bothe more and
lesse;

For what man that hath freendes thurgh
fortune, 3434

Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse:
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful
commune.

CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so kene,
That no wight passed hir in hardinesse,
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse.
Of kinges blode of Perse is she de-
scended;

I seye nat that she hadde most fair-
nesse,

But of hir shape she mighte nat been
amended.

From hir childhede I finde that she
fledde 3445

Office of wommen, and to wode she
wente;

And many a wilde hertes blood she
shedde

With arwes brode that she to hem
sente.
She was so swift that she anon hem
hente,
And whan that she was elder, she wolde
kille 3450
Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente,
And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the montaignes al the
night,
And slepen under a bush, and she coude
eke 3455
Wrastlen by verray force and verray
might
With any yong man, were he never so
wight;
Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes
stonde.
She kepte hir maydenhod from every
wight,
To no man deigned hir for to be
bonde. 3460

But atte laste hir frendes han hir maried
To Odenake, a prince of that contree,
Al were it so that she hem longe taried;
And ye shul understonde how that he
Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she,
But nathelees, whan they were knit in-
fere, 3466
They lived in Ioye and in felicitee;
For ech of hem hadde other leef and
dere.

Save o thing, that she never wolde
assente
By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye 3470
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente
To have a child, the world to multiplie;
And al-so sone as that she mighte
espye
That she was nat with childe with that
dede,
Than wolde she suffre him doon his
fantasye 3475
Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke
cast,
Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game
Til fully fourty dayes weren past;

Than wolde she ones suffre him do the
same. 3480
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,
He gat na-more of hir, for thus she
seyde,
'It was to wyves lecherye and shame
In other cas, if that men with hem
pleyde.'

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,
The whiche she kepte in vertu and let-
trure; 3486
But now un-to our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with me-
sure,
So penele in the werre, and curteis
eke, 3490
Ne more labour mighte in werre endure,
Was noon, thogh al this world men
sholde seke.

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing;
She was al clad in perree and in gold,
And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunt-
ing, 3496
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to
entende
To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,
How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dis-
pende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete,
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek
she,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In the orient, with many a fair citee,
Apertenaunt un-to the magestee 3505
Of Rome, and with strong hond helde
hem ful faste;
Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem
flee,
Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.

Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to
rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo,
And how that al this proces fil in
dede, 3511
Why she conquered and what title had
therto,

And after of hir meschief and hir wo,
How that she was biseged and y-take,
Let him un-to my maister Petrark go,
That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.

When Odenake was deed, she mightily
The regnes heeld, and with hir propre
honde

Agayn hir fous she faught so cruelly,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that
londe 3520

That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde,
That she ne wolde up-on his lond wer-
reye;

With hir they made alliaunce by bonde
To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and
pleye.

The emperour of Rome, Claudius, 3525
Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,
Ne dorste never been so corageous,
Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
Witbin the feld that dorste with hir
fichte 3530

Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes
slen,
Or with hir meynee putten hem to
flighte.

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Hermanno, and Thymalaö 3535
Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty quene may no whyl endure.
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to misaventure.

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,
He shoop up-on this queen to do ven-
geaunce,

And with his legiouns he took his
weye

Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to
seye, 3545

He made hir flee, and atte laste hir
hente,

And fettred hir, and eek hir children
tweye,

And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome
he wente.

Amonges othere thinges that he wan,
Hir char, that was with gold wrought
and perree, 3550

This grete Romayn, this Aurelian,
Hath with him lad, for that men sholde
it see.

Biforen his triumphe walketh she
With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hang-
ing; 3554

Coroung was she, as after hir degree,
And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hir, alas!

And she that helmed was in starke
stoures, 3560

And wan by force tounes stronge and
toures,

Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
And she that bar the ceptre ful of
floures

Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte.

(NERO follows in T. ; see p. 591.)

DE PETRO REGE ISPANNIE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of
Spayne, 3565

Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee,
Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth com-
playne!

Out of thy lond thy brother made thee
flee;

And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his
tente, 3570

Wher-as he with his owene hond slow
thee,

Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak
ther-inne,

Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the
glede,

He brew this cursednes and al this
sinne. 3575

The 'wikked nest' was werker of this
nede;

Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,

Broughte this worthy king in swich a
brike. 3580

DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also,
That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,
Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,
And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye,
They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the
morwe. 3586
Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and
gye,
And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe.

DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,
God of delyt, and scourge of Lumbardye,
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte,
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double
allye,
For he thy newew was, and sone-in-lawe,
With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye;
But why, ne how, noot I that thou were
slawe. 3596

DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,
And with him been his litel children
three. 3601
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a
cage!

Dampned was he to deye in that pris-
oun, 3605
For Roger, which that bisshop was of
Pyse,
Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him
ryse,
And putten him to prisoun in swich
wyse
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he
hadde 3610

So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse,
And therwith-al it was ful povre and
badde.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wout was to be
brought, 3614
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.
He herde it wel,—but he spak right
nought,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thocht,
That they for hunger wolde doon him
dyen.
'Allas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was
wroght!' 3619
Therwith the teres fillen from his yën.

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of
age,
Un-to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye
wepe?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our
potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe.
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen
ever! 3626
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe
crepe;
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me
were lever.'

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay, 3630
And seyde, 'far-wel, fader, I moot dye,'
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same
day.
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, 'allas, fortune! and weyla-
way! 3635
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'

His children wende that it for hunger
was
That he his armes gnou, and nat for wo,
And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, allas!
But rather eet the flesh upon us two;
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us
fro 3641
And eet y-nough:' right thus they to
him seyde,
And after that, with-in a day or two,

They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and
deyde.

Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger
starf; 3645

Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;
From heigh estaat fortune away him
carf.

Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suf-
fyse.

Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, 3650
That highte Dant, for he can al devyse
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he
faill.

NERO.

Al-though that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655
This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,
Both Est and West, South and Septem-
trioun;

Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte
Were alle his clothes brouded up and
doun; 3659
For he in gemmes greetly gan delyte.

More delicat, more pompous of array,
More proud was never emperour than
he;

That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,
After that tyme he nolde it never see.

Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret
plentee 3665

To fische in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.
His lustes were al lawe in his decree,
For fortune as his freend him wolde
obeye.

He Rome brende for his delicacye;
The senatours he slow up-on a day. 3670
To here how men wolde wepe and crye;
And slow his brother, and by his sister
lay.

His moder made he in pitous array;
For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde
Wher he conceyved was; so weilaway!
That he so litel of his moder tolde! 3676

No tere out of his yën for that sighte
Ne cam, but seyde, 'a fair womman was
she.'

Gret wonder is, how that he coude or
mighte

Be domesman of hir dede beautee. 3680
The wyn to bringen him comaunded he,
And drank anon; non other wo he
made.

Whan might is Ioyned un-to crueltee,
Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,
To teche him letterure and curteisye,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;
And whyl this maister hadde of him
maistrye,

He makid him so conning and so souple
That longe tyme it was er tirannye 3691
Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,
For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse
Discretly as by worde and nat by
dede; — 3696
'Sir,' wolde he seyn, 'an emperour moot
nede

Be vertuous, and hate tirannye' —
For which he in a bath made him to
blede 3699
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce
In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,
Which afterward him thoughte a greet
grevaunce;

Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.
But natheles this Seneca the wyse 3705
Chees in a bath to deye in this manere
Rather than han another tormentyse;
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister
dere.

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce; 3710
For though that he were strong, yet was
she stronger;

She thoughte thus, 'by god, I am to nyc
To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce
In heigh degree, and emperour him
calle.

By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce,
When he leest weneth, sonest shal he
falle.' 3716

The peple roos up-on him on a night
For his defeaute, and whan he it espyed,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed,
He knocked faste, and ay, the more he
cryed, 3721

The faster shette they the dores alle;
Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self mis-
gyed.
And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he
calle.

The peple cryde and rombled up and
doun, 3725

That with his eres herde he how they
seyde,

‘Wher is this false tyraunt, this Ne-
roun?’

For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,
And to his goddes pitously he preyde

For socour, but it mighte nat bityde. 3730

For drede of this, him thoughte that he
deyde,
And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,

And to this cherles two he gan to
preye 3735

To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan that he were
deed.

Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.
Him-self he slow, he coude no better
reed,

Of which fortune lough, and hadde a
game. 3740

DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king
That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,

Ne strengre was in feeld of alle thing,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,

Ne more pompous in heigh presump-
cioun 3745

Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde him up and
doun

Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

Nat only that this world hadde him in
awe

For lesinge of richesse or libertee, 3750
But he made every man reneye his lawe.

‘Nabugodonosor was god,’ seyde he,
‘Noon other god sholde adoured be.’

Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee, 3755

Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;
Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,

With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,
And yit, for al his pompe and al his
might, 3760

Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright,
Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his
tente

Ful prively she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun she
wente.

DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTRIS.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus 3765
To telle his hye royal magestee,

His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?
For swich another was ther noon as he.

Rede which that he was in Machabee,
And rede the proude wordes that he
seyde, 3770

And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,
And in an hill how wrechedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunched so in
pryde

That verrailly he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde, 3775

And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.

And goddes peple hadde he most in
hate,

Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in
payne,

Wening that god ne mighte his pryde
abate. 3780

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee
Of Iewes weren venquissshed mightily,

Unto the Iewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,

And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,
Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone, 3786

To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

God for his manace him so sore smoot
 With invisible wounde, ay incurable, 3790
 That in his guttes carf it so and boot
 That his peynes weren importable.
 And certainly, the wreche was resonable,
 For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;
 But from his purpos cursed and dampna-
 ble 3795
 For al his smert he wolde him nat re-
 streyne;

But bad anon apparailen his host,
 And sodeynly, er he of it was war,
 God daunted al his pride and al his bost.
 For he so sore fil out of his char, 3800
 That it his limes and his skin to-tar,
 So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,
 But in a chayer men aboute him bar,
 Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

The wreche of god him smoot so
 cruelly 3805
 That thurgh his body wikked wormes
 crepte;
 And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,
 That noon of al his meynce that him
 kepte,
 Whether so he wook or elles slepte,
 Ne mighte nocht for stink of him en-
 dure. 3810
 In this meschief he wayled and eek
 wepte,
 And knew god lord of every creature.

To al his host and to him-self also
 Ful wlatson was the stink of his careyne;
 No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro. 3815
 And in this stink and this horrible peyne
 He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.
 Thus hath this robbour and this homi-
 cyde,
 That many a man made to wepe and
 pleyne, 3819
 Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde.

DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune,
 That every wight that hath discrecioun
 Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.
 This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
 He wan by strength, or for his hye re-
 noun 3825

They weren glad for pees un-to him
 sende.
 The pryde of man and beste he leyde
 adoun,
 Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.

Comparisoun might never yit be maked
 Bitwixe him and another conquerour;
 For al this world for drede of him hath
 quaked, 3831
 He was of knighthode and of fredom
 flour;
 Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;
 Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte
 aswage
 His hye entente in armes and labour; 3835
 So was he ful of leonyn corage.

What preys were it to him, though I yow
 tolde
 Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
 Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
 Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem
 in-to wo? 3840
 I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,
 The world was his, what sholde I more
 devyse?
 For though I write or tolde you evermo
 Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Macha-
 bee; 3845
 Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,
 That first was king in Grece the con-
 tree.
 O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!
 That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!
 Emponed of thyn owene folk thou
 were; 3850
 Thy *sys* fortune hath turned into *as*,
 And yit for thee ne weep she never a
 tere!

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne
 The deeth of gentillesse and of fraun-
 chyse,
 That al the world welded in his
 demeyne, 3855
 And yit him thoughte it mighte nat
 suffyse?
 So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.
 Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte
 False fortune, and poison to despyse,

The whiche two of al this wo I
wyte? 3860

DE IULIO CESARE.

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet
labour

Fro humble bed to royal magestee,
Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by lond and
see,

By strengthe of hond, or elles by
treetee, 3865

And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;
And sithle of Rome the emperour was
he,

Til that fortune wex his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye 3869

Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe,
That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye
As fer as that the day biginneth clawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem
take and slawe,

Save fewe folk that with Pompeius
fledde,

Thurgh which thou putttest al thorient in
awe. 3875

Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that sleigh at this
bataille; 3879

I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour
Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.
Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee
broghte!

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885

With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye staat envye,
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye
Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse, 3890
And east the place, in whiche he sholde
dye

With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.

This Iulius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,

And in the Capitolie anon him
hente 3895

This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stikede him with boydekins anoon
With many a wounde, and thus they lete
him lye;

But never gronte he at no strook but
oon,

Or elles at two, but-if his storie lyc. 3900

So manly was this Iulius at herte
And so wel lovele estaatly honestee,
That, though his deedly woundes sore
smerte,

His mantel over his hippes casteth he,
For no man sholde seen his privitee. 3905
And, as he lay on deying in traunce,
And wiste verraily that deed was he,
Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Sweton, and to Valerie also, 3910
That of this storie wryten word and ende,
How that to these grete conqueroures
two

Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for ever-mo. 3915
Witnessse on alle these conqueroures
stronge.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,
And to be brent men to the fyr him
ladde. 3920

But swich a reyn down fro the welkne
shadde

That slow the fyr, and made him to
escape;

But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him
gape.

Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente
For to biginne a newe werre agayn. 3926
He wende wel, for that fortune him
sente

Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the
rayn,

That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn;

And eek a sweven up-on a night he
mette, 3930
Of which he was so proud and eek so
fayn,
That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.

Up-on a tree he was, as that him
thoughte,
Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and
syde,

And Phebus eek a fair towaille him
broughte 3935
To drye him with, and ther-for wex his
pryde;

And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science
habounde,

He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
And she his drem bigan right thus
expounde. 3940

'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to
mene,
And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,

And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes for to
seyn;

Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, cer-
teyn; 3945
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal
thee drye;'

Thus warned she him ful plat and ful
pleyn,

His doghter, which that called was
Phanye.

Anhangd was Cresus, the proude king,
His royal trone mighte him nat
availe. — 3950

Tragedie is noon other maner thing,
Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,
But for that fortune alwey wol assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that ben
proude;

For when men trusteth hir, than wol she
faillie, 3955

And covere hir brighte face with a
cloude.

Explicit Tragedia.

Here stinteth the Knight the Monk of his Tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

*The prologue of the Nonne Prestes
Tale.*

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-
more of this,

That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel hevynesse
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I
gesse. 3960

I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe
and ese,

To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas!
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre es-
taat, 3965

And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abyde in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh
me,

And of swich thing were goodly for to
telle.'

'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by Seint Poules
belle, 3970

Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he
clappeth loude,

He spak how "fortune covered with a
cloude"

I noot never what, and als of a "Trage-
die"

Right now ye herde, and parde! no rem-
edie

It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne 3975
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne,
As ye han seyde, to here of hevynesse.

Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow
blesse!

Your tale anyeth al this companye;
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye;
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.

Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by
your name,
I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat
elles,
For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every
syde, 3985
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,
I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,
Although the slough had never been so
depe;
Than had your tale al be told in vayn.
For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
“Wher-as a man may have noon audi-
ence, 3991
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.”
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.
Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow
preye.’ 3995
‘Nay,’ quod this monk, ‘I have no lust
to pleye;
Now let another telle, as I have told.’

Than spak our host, with rude speche
and bold,
And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest
anon,
‘Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou
sir Iohn, 4000
Tel us swich thing as may our hertes
glade,
Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a
lade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule
and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.’
‘Yis, sir,’ quod he, ‘yis, host, so mote I
go, 4006
But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be
blamed:’ —
And right anon his tale he hath at-
tamed,
And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, sir
Iohn. 4010

Explicit.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

*Here Biginneth the Nonne Preestes
Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chaun-
tecleer and Pertelote.*

A POVRE widwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cot-
age,
Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my
tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf, 4016
For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
By housbondrye, of such as God hir
sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren
two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte
Malle. 4021
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir
halle,

In which she eet ful many a sclendre
meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a
deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir
throte; 4025
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing for to
daunce, 4030
Napoplexye shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne
reed;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and
blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond
no lak,
Seynd bakoun, and somtyme an ey or
tweye, 4035
For she was as it were a maner deye.

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dlich with-oute,
 In which she hadde a cok, high Chaunte-
 cleer,
 In all the land of crowing nas his peer.
 His vois was merier than the mery or-
 gon 4041
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his
 logge,
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun 4045
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben
 amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 4050
 His bile was blak, and as the Ieet it
 shoon;
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
 His nayles whytter than the lillie flour,
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his govern-
 aunce 4055
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his ples-
 aunce,
 Whiche were his sustres and his para-
 mours,
 And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir
 throte
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debon-
 aire, 4061
 And compaignable, and bar hir-self so
 faire,
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night
 old,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold
 Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
 He loved hir so, that wel was him ther-
 with. 4066
 But such a Ioye was it to here hem
 singe,
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to
 springe,
 In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in
 londe.'
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and
 singe. 4071
 And so bifel, that in a daweninge,

As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
 This Chauntecleer gan Gronen in his
 throte, 4076
 As man that in his dreem is drecched
 sore.
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him
 rore,
 She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this
 manere? 4080
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'
 And he answerde and seyde thus,
 'madame,
 I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
 By god, me mette I was in swich mes-
 chief
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore
 afright. 4085
 Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche
 aright,
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
 Me mette, how that I romed up and
 down
 Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a
 beste,
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad
 areste 4090
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me
 deed.
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his
 eres,
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his
 heres;
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen
 tweye. 4095
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
 This caused me my Groning, doutelees.'
 'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, herte-
 lees!
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my
 love; 4100
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith.
 For certes, what so any womman seith,
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and
 free,
 And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
 Ne him that is agast of every tool, 4106
 Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!

How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your
love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a
berd? 4110
Allas! and conne ye been agast of
swevenis?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven
is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,
Whan humours been to habundant in a
wight. 4115
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-
night,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here
dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem
byte, 4121
Of contek, and of whelpes grete and
lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles
blake, 4125
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coule I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a
man, 4130
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of
dremes?
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro
the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat
lye, 4135
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-SELF to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your
prow; 4140
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretec, by
kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!

Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 4145
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat replect of humours
hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 4150
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that
mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and
cte hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-
more.'
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of
your lore. 4160
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to
drede.
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee 4165
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of Ioye as tribulaciouns 4170
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argu-
ment;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours that
men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes
wente 4175
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and cek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o
cotage, 4180
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;

That other man was logged wel y-nough,
 As was his aventure, or his fortune,
 That us governeth alle as in commune.
 And so bifel, that, longe er it were
 day, 4191
 This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
 How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
 And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
 This night I shal be mordred ther I
 lye. 4195
 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
 In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere
 abrayde;
 But whan that he was wakned of his
 sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no
 keep; 4200
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am
 now slawe;
 Bihold my bloddy woundes, depe and
 wyde! 4205
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod
 he,
 'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do thilke carte aresten boldely. 4210
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to
 sayn;'
 And tolde him every poynt how he was
 slayn,
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful
 trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
 To his felawes in he took the way; 4216
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.
 The hostiler answered him anon,
 And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon, 4220
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
 This man gan fallen in suspeciuon,
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he
 lette,
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and
 fond 4225
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse

As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and Iustice of this fel-
 onye:— 4230
 'My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lyth gaping upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
 'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe
 slayn!' 4235
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
 The peple out-sterete, and caste the cart
 to grounde,
 And in the middel of the dong they
 founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
 O blisful god, that art so Iust and
 trewe! 4240
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre
 alway!
 Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
 Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
 To god, that is so Iust and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffire it heled be; 4245
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusiuon.
 And right anoon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him
 pyned,
 And cek the hostiler so sore engyned, 4250
 That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse
 anoon,
 And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
 Here may men seen that dremes been
 to drede.
 And certes, in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 4255
 (I gabbe nat, so have I Ioye or blis,)
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to
 tarie, 4260
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
 But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
 The wind gan change, and blew right as
 hem leste.
 Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 4265
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the
 day;

Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes
 syde,
 And him comaunded, that he sholde
 abyde, 4270
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe
 wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an
 ende.'
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he
 mette,
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;
 As for that day, he preyde him to
 abyde. 4275
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful
 faste.
 'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte
 agaste,
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 4280
 For swevenes been but vanitees and Iapes.
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase therwithal;
 Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne
 shal.
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer
 abyde, 4285
 And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,
 God wot it reweth me; and have good
 day.'
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his
 way.
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours
 y-seyled,
 Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it
 eyled, 4290
 But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
 And ship and man under the water wente
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere, 4295
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
 That no man sholde been to recchelees
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
 Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I
 rede, 4300
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble
 king
 Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a
 thing;
 A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
 His mordre in his avisioun he say.

His norice him expounded every del 4305
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe
 him wel
 For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer
 old,
 And therfore litel tale hath he told
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
 By god, I hadde lever than my sherte 4310
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
 Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou, n
 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they
 been 4315
 Warning of thinges that men after seen.
 And forther-more, I pray yow loketh
 wel
 In the olde testament, of Daniel,
 If he held dremes any vanitee.
 Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye
 see 4320
 Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat
 alle)
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
 Loke of Egypt the king, daun Pharao,
 His bakere and his boteler also,
 Wher they ne felte noon effect in
 dremes. 4325
 Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde
 king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
 Which signified he sholde anhanged
 be? 4330
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn,
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be
 lorn,
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 4335
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun, 4341
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
 For they ben venimous, I woot it
 wel; 4345
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte
al this;

Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your
face, 4350

Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yēn,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio; 4354

Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —
Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe,
alas!

I am so ful of Ioye and of solas 4360
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.’
And with that word he fley doum fro the
beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to
calle,

For he had founde a corn, lay in the
yerd. 4365

Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doum,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to
grounde. 4371

He chukketh, whan he hath a corn
y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves
alle.

Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure. 4376

Whan that the month in which the
world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first makid
man,

Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel thar Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat
more; 4385

And knew by kynde, and by noon other
lore,

That it was pryme, and crew with blisful
stevene.

‘The sonne,’ he sayde, ‘is clomben up on
hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they
singe, 4391

And see the fresshe floures how they
springe;

Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.’
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.
God woot that worldly Ioye is sone
ago; 4396

And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saully mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabiltee.

Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret rever-
ence.

Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee, 4405

That in the grove hadde woned yeres
three,

By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night through-out the hegges
brast

Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the
faire

Was wont, and eek his wyves, to re-
paire; 4410

And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to
falle,

As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
That in awayt liggyn to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!

O newe Scariot, newe Genilon! 4417
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,

That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd slough fro the
bemes! 4421

Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy
dremes,

That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnessse on him, that any perfit clerk is,

That in scole is gret altercacioun 4426
In this matere, and greet disputioun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand
men.

But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustyn, 4431
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);
Or elles, if free choyes be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though god forwoot it, er that it was
wroght;

Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicionel. 4440
I wol not han to do of swich matere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counseil of his wyf, with
sorwe,

To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he had met the dreem, that I yow
tolde. 4445

Wommennes counseils been ful ofte
colde;

Wommannes counseil broghte us first to
wo,

And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
But for I noot, to whom it mighte dis-
plese, 4550

If I counseil of women wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich
matere,

And what thay seyn of women ye may
here.

Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat
myne; 4455

I can noon harm of no womman divyne.
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so
free

Song merier than the mermayde in the
see; 4460

For Physiologus seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yē,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to
crowe, 4466

But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he
sterte,

As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desyareth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 4470
Though he never crst had seyn it with
his yē.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him
espye,

He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye
gon?

Be ye affrayed of me that am your
freend? 4475

Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vilcinye.

I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye
singe. 4480

For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boece, or any that can
singe.

My lord your fader (god his soule
blesse!) 4485

And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret
ese;

And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow
plese.

But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.

And for to make his voys the more
strong,

He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe
his yēn 4495

He moste winke, so loude he wolde
cryen,

And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and
smal.

And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte
passe. 4501

I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a precestes sone yaf him a kuok

Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and
 nyce, 4505
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee,
 Let see, conne ye your fader countre-
 fete?' 4511
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to
 bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat
 espye,
 So was he ravished with his flaterye.
 Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
 Is in your courtes, and many a losen-
 geour, 4516
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow
 seith.
 Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 4520
 This Chauntecleer stood hie up-on his
 toos,
 Streeching his nekke, and heeld his eyen
 cloos,
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at
 ones,
 And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him
 beer, 4526
 For yet ne was ther no man that him
 sewed.
 O destinee, that mayst nat been es-
 chewed!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the
 bemes!
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
 And on a Friday fil al this mes-
 chaunce. 4531
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin that thy servant was this Chaunte-
 cleer,
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to
 dye? 4536
 O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was
 slayn
 With shot, compleynedest his deth so
 sore,

Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and
 thy lore, 4540
 The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I
 coude pleyne
 For Chauntecleres drede, and for his
 peyne.
 Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 4545
 Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
 Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite
 swerd,
 Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the
 berd,
 And slayn him (as saith us *Eneyas*),
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 4550
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the
 sighte.
 But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighite,
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his
 lyf,
 And that the Romayns hadde brend
 Cartage; 4555
 She was so ful of torment and of rage,
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast
 herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee 4560
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir
 lyves;
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn: —
 This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres
 two, 4565
 Herden these hennes crye and maken wo,
 And out at dores sterten they anon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;
 And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weyla-
 way! 4570
 Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they
 ran,
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and
 Gerland,
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray
 hogges 4575
 So were they fered for berking of the
 dogges

And shouting of the men and wimmen
 eke,
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte
 breke.
 They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem
 quelle; 4580
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
 So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*
 Certes, he Iakke Straw, and his meynee,
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming
 kille, 4586
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe
 and pouped,
 And therwithal thay shryked and they
 houped; 4590
 It semed as that heven sholde falle.
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth
 alle!
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede, un-to the fox he
 spak, 4596
 And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe
 me),
 Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600
 Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer
 abyde;
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.' —
 The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be
 don,' —
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 This cok brak from his mouth de-
 liverly, 4606
 And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.

And whan the fox saugh that he was
 y-gon,
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer,
 allas!
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon tres-
 pas, 4610
 In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
 Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of
 the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I
 mente.
 I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me
 so.' 4615
 'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe
 two,
 And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood
 and bones,
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
 Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yē.
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde
 see, 4621
 Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!'
 'Na,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him
 meschaunce,
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his
 pees.' 4625
 Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moralitee, good men. 4630
 For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
 To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be
 stille.
 Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord, so make us alle good
 men; 4635
 And bringe us to his heighe blisse.
 Amen.

Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.

EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'SIR Nonnes Preest,' our hoste seyde
 anoon,
 'Y-blessed be thy breche, and every
 stoon!
 This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.
 But, by my trouthe, if thou were secu-
 ler, 4640
 Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right
 For, if thou have corage as thou hast
 night,
 Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
 Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.

See, whiche braunes hath this gentil
 Preest, 4645
 So greet a nekke, and swich a large
 breest!
 He loketh as a sperhawk with his yen;
 Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen
 With brasil, ne with greyn of Portin-
 gale.
 Now sire, faire falle yow for youre
 tale!' 4650
 And after that he, with ful mery chere,
 Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

GROUP C.

THE PHISIENS TALE.

Here folweth the Phisiciens Tale.

THER was, as telleth Titus Livius,
 A knight that called was Virginius,
 Fulfuld of honour and of worthinesse,
 And strong of freendes and of greet
 richesse.
 This knight a doghter hadde by his
 wyf, 5
 No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
 Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
 Aboven every wight that man may see;
 For nature hath with sovereyn diligence
 Y-formed hir in so greet excellence, 10
 As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Na-
 ture,
 Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
 Whan that me list; who can me countre-
 fete?
 Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and
 bete,
 Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel
 seyn, 15
 Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
 Outher to grave or peynte or forge or
 bete,
 If they presumed me to countrefete.
 For he that is the former principal
 Hath made me his vicair general, 20
 To forme and peynten erthely creaturis

Right as me list, and ech thing in my
 cure is
 Under the mone, that may wane and
 waxe,
 And for my werk right no-thing wol I
 axe;
 My lord and I ben ful of oon accord; 25
 I made hir to the worship of my lord.
 So do I alle myne othere creatures,
 What colour that they han, or what
 figures.'—
 Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.
 This mayde of age twelf yeer was and
 tweye, 30
 In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.
 For right as she can peynte a lillie whyt
 And reed a rose, right with swich peyn-
 ture
 She peynted hath this noble creature
 Er she were born, up-on hir limes
 free, 35
 Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde
 be;
 And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete
 Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.
 And if that excellent was hir beautee,
 A thousand-fold more vertuuous was
 she. 40
 In hir ne lakked no condicioun,
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.

As wel in goost as body chast was she;
 For which she floured in virginitee
 With alle humilitee and abstinence, 45
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
 With mesure eek of bering and array.
 Discreet she was in answering alway;
 Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I
 seyn,
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and
 pleyn, 50
 No countrefeted termes hadde she
 To seme wys; but after hir degree
 She spak, and alle hir wordes more and
 lesse
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.
 Shanifast she was in maydens shamfast-
 nesse, 55
 Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.
 Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no mais-
 trye;
 For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,
 As men in fyr wol casten oile or
 grece. 60
 And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
 For that she wolde fleen the companye
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces, 65
 That been occasions of daliaunces.
 Swich thinges maken children for to be
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70
 Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.
 And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,
 That lordes doghtres han in gov-
 ernance,
 Ne taketh of my wordes no disple-
 aunce;
 Thenketh that ye ben set in govern-
 inges 75
 Of lordes doghters, only for two thinges;
 Outher for ye han kept your honestee,
 Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
 And knowen wel y-nough the olde
 daunce,
 And han forsaken fully swich mes-
 chaunce 80
 For evermo; therefore, for Cristes sake,
 To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne
 slake.
 A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft

His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,
 Can kepe a forest best of any man. 85
 Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye
 can;
 Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,
 Lest ye be dampned for your wikke en-
 tente;
 For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.
 And taketh kepe of that that I shal
 seyn; 90
 Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
 Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.
 Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,
 Though ye han children, be it oon or
 two,
 Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce,
 Whyl that they been under your gov-
 ernance.
 Beth war that by ensample of your liv-
 inge, 97
 Or by your negligence in chastisinge,
 That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,
 If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye.
 Under a shepherde softe and negligent
 The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb
 to-rent.
 Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,
 For I mot turne agayn to my matere.
 This mayde, of which I wol this tale
 expresse, 105
 So kepte hir-self, hir neded no mais-
 tresse;
 For in hir living maydens mighten rede,
 As in a book, every good word or dede,
 That longeth to a mayden vertuous; 109
 She was so prudent and so bountevous.
 For which the fame out-sprong on every
 syde
 Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee
 wyde;
 That thurgh that land they preyed hir
 echone,
 That loved vertu, save envye allone,
 That sory is of other mennes wele, 115
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;
 (The doctour maketh this descripcioun).
 This mayde up-on a day wente in the
 toun
 Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,
 As is of yonge maydens the manere. 120
 Now was ther thanne a Iustice in that
 toun,
 That governour was of that regioun.

And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste
 Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful
 faste, 124
 As she cam forby ther this Iuge stood.
 Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
 So was he caught with beautee of this
 mayde ;
 And to him-self ful prively he sayde,
 'This mayde shal be myn, for any man.'
 Anon the feend in-to his herte ran,
 And taughte him sodeynly, that he by
 slighte 131
 The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.
 For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
 Him thoughte, he was nat able for to
 spede ;
 For she was strong of freendes, and eek
 she 135
 Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
 That wel he wiste he mighte hir never
 winne
 As for to make hir with hir body sinne.
 For which, by greet deliberacioun, 139
 He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,
 Which that he knew for subtil and for
 bold.
 This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath
 told
 In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,
 He sholde telle it to no creature, 144
 And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed.
 Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
 Glad was this Iuge and maked him greet
 chere,
 And yaf hym yiftes preciose and dere.
 Whan shapen was al bir conspiracye
 Fro point to point, how that his lecherye
 Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly, 151
 As ye shul here it after openly,
 Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Clau-
 dius.
 This false Iuge that highte Apius, 154
 So was his name, (for this is no fable,
 But knowen for historial thing notable,
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),
 This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute
 To hasten his delyt al that he may.
 And so bifel sone after, on a day, 160
 This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
 And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.
 This false cherl cam forth a ful greet
 pas, 164

And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wille,
 As dooth me right up-on this pitous
 bille,
 In which I pleyne up-on Virginius.
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
 I wol it preve, and finde good witesse,
 That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.'
 The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his
 absence, 171
 I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.
 Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here ;
 Thou shalt have al right, and no wrong
 here.'
 Virginius cam, to wite the Iuges wille,
 And right anon was rad this cursed
 bille ; 176
 The sentence of it was as ye shul here.
 'To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,
 Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,
 How that a knight, called Virginius, 180
 Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
 Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,
 My servant, which that is my thral by
 right,
 Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a
 night,
 Whyl that she was ful yong ; this wol I
 preve 185
 By witesse, lord, so that it nat yow
 greve.
 She nis his doghter nat, what so he
 seye ;
 Wherefore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I
 preye,
 Yeld me my thral, if that it be your
 wille.'
 Lo! this was al the sentence of his
 bille. 190
 Virginius gan up-on the cherl biholde,
 But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
 And wolde have preved it, as sholde a
 knight,
 And eek by witnessing of many a wight,
 That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,
 This cursed Iuge wolde no-thing tarie,
 Ne here a word more of Virginius, 197
 But yaf his Iugement, and seyde thus:—
 'I deme anon this cherl his servant
 have ;
 Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir
 save. 200
 Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our
 warde,

The cherl shal have his thral, this I
awarde.'

And when this worthy knight Vir-
ginius,

Thurgh sentence of this Iustice Apius,
Moste by force his dere doghter yiven
Un-to the Iuge, in lecherye to liven, 206
He gooth him hoom, and sette him in
his halle,

And leet anon his dere doghter calle,
And, with a face deed as asshen colde,
Upon hir humble face he gan biholde,
With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his
herte, 211

Al wolde he from his purpos nat con-
verte.

'Doghter,' quod he, 'Virginia, by thy
name,

Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or
shame,

That thou most suffre; alas! that I was
bore! 215

For never thou deservedest wherfore
To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.

O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,
Which I have fostred up with swich

plesaunce,
That thou were never out of my remem-
braunce! 220

O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste joye also,

O gemme of chastitee, in pacience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sen-
tence.

For love and nat for hate, thou most be
deed; 225

Mypitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.
Allas! that ever Apius thee say!

Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day'—
And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore

Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it
more. 230

'Omercy, dere fader,' quod this mayde,
And with that word she both hir armes
layde

About his nekke, as she was wont to do:
The teres broste out of hir cyeen two,

And seyde, 'gode fader, shal I dye? 235
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?'

'No, certes, dere doghter myn,' quod
he.

'Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,'
quod she,

'My deeth for to compleyne a litel
space;

For pardee, Iepte yaf his doghter grace
For to compleyne, er he hir slow, alas!

And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
But for she ran hir fader first to see,

To welcome him with greet solemnittee.'
And with that word she fil aswowne

anon, 245
And after, when hir swowning is agon,
She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,

'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a
mayde.

Yif me my deeth, er that I have a
shame;

Doth with your child your wil, a goddes
name!' 250

And with that word she preyed him
ful ofte,

That with his swerd he wolde smyte
softe,

And with that word aswowne doun she
fil.

Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and
wil,

Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it
hente, 255

And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.

And when the Iuge it saugh, as seith the
storie,

He bad to take him and anhange him
faste.

But right anon a thousand peple in
thraсте, 260

To save the knight, for routhe and for
pitee,

For knowen was the false iniquitee.
The peple anon hath suspect of this

thing,
By manere of the cherles chalanging,

That it was by the assent of Apius; 265
They wisten wel that he was lecherous.

For which un-to this Apius they gon,
And caste him in a prison right anon,

Wher-as he slow him-self; and Claudius,
That servant was un-to this Apius, 270

Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
But that Virginus, of his pitee,

So preyde for him that he was exyled;
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.

The remenent were anhanged, more and
lesse, 275,

That were consentant of this cursed-
nesse. —

Heer men may seen how sinne hath
his meryte!

Beth war, for no man woot whom god
wol smyte

In no degree, ne in which maner
wyse

The worm of conscience may agryse 280
Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.
For be he lewed man, or elles lered,
He noot how sone that he shal been
afered.

Therefore I rede yow this conseil take, 285
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

Here endeth the Phisiciens tale.

WORDS OF THE HOST.

*The wordes of the Host to the Phisicien
and the Pardoner.*

OUR Hoste gan to swere as he were
wood,

'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by
blood!

This was a fals cherl and a fals Iustyse!
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse 290
Come to thise Iuges and hir advocas!

Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!
Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!

Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature 295

Ben cause of deeth to many a creature.
Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel
sayn;

Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now 299

Men han ful ofte more harm than prow.
But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,
This is a pitous tale for to here.

But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,

And eek thyne urinals and thy Ior-
danes, 305

Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
And every boist ful of thy letuarie;

God blesse hem, and our lady seinte
Marie!

So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by seint Ronyan! 310
Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in
terme;

But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to
erme,

That I almost have caught a cardiacle.
By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
Or elles a draught of moyste and corny
ale, 315

Or but I here anon a mery tale,
Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.

Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,' he seyde,
'Tel us som mirthe or Iapes right anon.'

'It shall be doon,' quod he, 'by seint
Ronyan! 320

But first,' quod he, 'heer at this ale-
stake

I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.'
But right anon thise gentils gonne to

crye,
'Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;

Tel us som moral thing, that we may
lere 325

Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly
here.'

'I graunte, y-wis,' quod he, 'but I mot
thinke

Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I
drinke.'

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

Here foloweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimothcum, scato.

'LORDINGS,' quod he, 'in chirches whan
I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ringe it out as round as gooth a
belle, 331
For I can al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was —
"Radix malorum est Cupiditas."
First I pronounce whennes that I
come, 335
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and
somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne
clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my
tades, 341
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun, 345
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal
stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Jewes
shepe, 351
"Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes
kepe;
If that this boon be wasshe in any
welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath etc, or worm y-
stonge, 355
Tak water of that welle, and wash his
tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every
sore

Shal every sheep be hool, that of this
welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what
I telle 360
If that the good-man, that the bestes
oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him
croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a
draughte,
As thilke holy lewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it heleth lalousye; 366
For, though a man be falle in lalous
rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mis-
triste,
Though he the sooth of hir defeaute
wiste; 370
Al had she taken preestes two or three.
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this mit-
cyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or
otes, 375
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.
Good men and wommen, o thing
warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now,
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old, 381
That hath y-maad hir housbond coke-
wold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no
grace
To offren to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich
blame, 385
He wol com up and offre in goddes
name,
And I assoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to
me."
By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by
yeer,

An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet, 391
 And whan the lewed peple is down y-set,
 I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
 And telle an hundred false Iapes more.
 Than peyne I me to strecche forth the
 nekke, 395
 And est and west upon the peple I
 bekke,
 As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so
 yerne,
 That it is loye to see my bisnesse.
 Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse 400
 Is al my preching, for to make hem
 free
 To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.
 For my entente is nat but for to winne,
 And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
 I rekke never, whan that they ben
 beried, 405
 Though that her soules goon a-blake-
 beried!
 For certes, many a predicacioun
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
 To been avaunced by ipocrisyse, 410
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for
 hate.
 For, whan I dar non other weyes de-
 bate,
 Than wol I stinge him with my tonge
 smerte
 In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
 To been defamed falsly, if that he 415
 Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
 For, though I telle noght his propre
 name,
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same
 By signes and by othere circumstances.
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeas-
 ances; 420
 Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
 Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.
 But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
 I preche of no-thing but for covetyse.
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever
 was— 425

“*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*”
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
 Which that I use, and that is avaryce.
 But, though my-self be gilty in that
 sinne,
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
 From avaryce, and sore to repente. 431
 But that is nat my principal entente.
 I preche no-thing but for covetyse;
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.
 Than telle I hem ensamples many
 oon 435
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
 For lewed peple loven tales olde;
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and
 holde.
 What? trowe ye, the whyles I may
 preche,
 And winne gold and silver for I teche,
 That I wol live in povert wilfully? 441
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry
 londes;
 I wol not do no labour with myn
 hondes,
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby, 445
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and
 whete,
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village, 450
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
 Nay! I wol drinke lieour of the vyne,
 And have a loly wenche in every toun.
 But herketh, lordings, in conclusioun;
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale. 455
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny
 ale,
 By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyk-
 ing.
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can, 460
 Which I am wont to preche, for to
 winne.
 Now holde your pees, my tale I wol be-
 ginne.

THE PARDONERS TALE.

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.

IN Flaunders whylom was a companye
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes, 465
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe
 day and night,
 And etc also and drinken over hir might,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel
 sacrificyse
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed
 wyse, 470
 By superfluitee abhominable;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampna-
 ble,
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;
 Hem thoughte lewes rente him noght
 y-nough; 475
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
 And right anon than comen tombesteres
 Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres,
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
 Whiche been the verray develes offi-
 ceres 480
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye;
 The holy writ take I to my witsnesse,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
 Lo, how that dronken Loth, un-
 kindly, 485
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly;
 So dronke he was, he niste what he
 wroghte.
 Herodes, (who-so wel the stories
 soghte),
 When he of wyn was replet at his feste,
 Right at his owene table he yaf his
 heste 490
 To sleen the Baptist Iohn ful giltelees.
 Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;
 He seith, he can no difference finde
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
 And a man which that is dronkelewe, 495
 But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronken-
 esse.

O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
 O cause first of our confusioun,
 O original of our dampnacioun, 500
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood
 agayn!
 Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!
 Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 505
 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;
 For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,
 He was in Paradys; and whan that he
 Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree, 510
 Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes
 Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
 He wolde been the more mesurable 515
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
 Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre
 mouth,
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North
 and South,
 In erthe, in air, in water men to-swinke
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and
 drinke! 520
 Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
 'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek
 un-to mete,
 Shal god destroyen bothe,' as Paulus
 seith.
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the
 dede, 525
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and
 rede,
 That of his throte he maketh his privee,
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
 The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
 'Ther walken many of whiche yow told
 have I, 530
 I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is
 her god.'
 O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,
 Fulfid of donge and of corrupcioun! 535

At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
How greet labour and cost is thee to
finde!

These cokes, how they stampe, and
streyn, and grinde,

And turnen substaunce in-to accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent! 540

Out of the harde bones knocke they
The mary, for they caste nocht a-wey
That may go thurgh the golet softe and
swote;

Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt. 546
But certes, he that haunteth swich
delyces

Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.
A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronk-
nesse

Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face, 551
Sour is thy breath, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the
soun

As though thou seydest ay 'Sampsoun,
Sampsoun';

And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank
never no wyn. 555

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest
cure;

For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun. 559

In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the
rede,

And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.

This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly 565
In othere wyne, growing faste by,

Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
That whan a man hath drunken
draughtes three,

And weneth that he be at hoom in
Chepe,

He is in Spayne, right at the toune of
Lepe, 570

Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;
And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun,
Sampsoun.'

But herkne, lordings, o word, I yow
preye,

That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in the olde testament, 575
Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it
lere.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dis-
honour, 580

Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.

And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—

Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I— 585
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly

Of wyn-veying to hem that han lusty.
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.

And now that I have spoke of
glotonye,

Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,

And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
BlaspHEME of Crist, manslaughter, and
wast also

Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreve and contrarie of honour 595

For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,

The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,

In alle governaunce and policie 600
He is, as by commune opinioun,

Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet hon-
our, 604

Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par
chaunce,

That alle the grettest that were of that
lond,

Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be, 609

He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, 'ther wol I nat lese my name;

Ne I wol nat take on me so greet de-
fame,

Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours; 614

For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.

For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours

As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.
 This wyse philosophre thus seyde he. 620
 Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
 The king of Parthes, as the book seith
 us,
 Sente him a paire of dees of gold in
 scorn,
 For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
 For which he heeld his glorie or his re-
 noun 625
 At no value or reputacioun.
 Lordes may finden other maner pley
 Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away.
 Now wol I speke of othes false and
 grete
 A word or two, as olde bokes trete. 630
 Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
 And false swering is yet more reprevable.
 The heighe god forbad swering at al,
 Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
 Of swering seith the holy Ieremye, 635
 'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and
 nat lye,
 And swere in dome, and eek in right-
 wisesse;'
 But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
 Bihold and see, that in the firste table
 Of heighe goddes hestes honourable, 640
 How that the seconde heste of him is
 this —
 'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'
 Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering
 Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stond-
 eth; 645
 This knowen, that his hestes understond-
 eth,
 How that the second heste of god is
 that.
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al
 plat,
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his
 hous,
 That of his othes is to outrageous. 650
 'By goddes precious herte, and by his
 nayles,
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in
 Hayles,
 Seven is my chauce, and thyn is cink
 and treye;
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte
 go' — 655

This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones
 two,
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us
 dyde,
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and
 smale; 659
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

THISE ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a tavernne for to drinke;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle
 clinke 664
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
 And look that thou reporte his name
 wel.'
 'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-
 a-del. 670
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two
 houres;
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench up-
 right;
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth
 Deeth, 675
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte
 a-two,
 And wente his wey with-outen wordes
 mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pesti-
 lence:
 And, maister, er ye come in his pres-
 ence, 680
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-
 more.'
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn
 this yeer, 686
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet vil-
 lage,
 Both man and womman, child and hyne,
 and page.
 I trowe his habitacioun be there;
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were.

Er that he dide a man in dishonour.' 691
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this ryotour,
 'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by wey and eek bystrete,
 I make a vow to goddes digne bones!

Herkneth, felawes, we three been al
 ones; 696

Lat ech of us holde up his hond til
 other,

And ech of us bicomen othes brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour
 Deeth;

He shal be slayn, which that so many
 sleeth, 700

By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'

Togidres han these three her trouthes
 plight,

To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owene y-boren
 brother.

And up they sterte al dronken, in this
 rage, 705

And forth they goon towards that vil-
 lage,

Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
 And many a grisly ooth than han they
 sworn,

And Cristes blessed body they to-rente —
 'Deeth shal be deed, if that they may
 him hente.' 710

Whan they han goon nat fully half a
 myle,

Right as they wolde han troden over a
 style,

An old man and a povre with hem mette.
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,

And seyde thus, 'now, lordes, god yow
 see!' 715

The proudest of these ryoutoures three
 Answerde agayn, 'what? carl, with sory
 grace,

Why artow al forwrapped save thy
 face?

Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'
 This olde man gan loke in his vis-
 age, 720

And seyde thus, 'for I ne can nat finde
 A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,

Neither in citee nor in no village,
 That wolde change his youthe for myn
 age;

And therefore moot I han myn age stille,
 As longe time as it is goddes wille. 726

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my
 lyf;

Thus walke I, lyk a resteles caityf,
 And on the ground, which is my modres
 gate,

I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and
 late, 730

And seye, "leve moder, leet me in!
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and
 skin!

Allas! whan shul my bones been at
 reste?

Moder, with yow wolde I change my
 cheste,

That in my chambre longe tyme hath
 be, 735

Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"
 But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
 For which ful pale and welked is my
 face.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
 To speken to an old man vileinye, 740

But he trespasse in worde, or elles in
 dede.

In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
 "Agayns an old man, hoor upon his
 heed,

Ye sholde aryse;" wherfor I yeve yow
 reed,

Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm
 now, 745

Na-more than ye wolde men dide to
 yow

In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
 And god be with yow, wher ye go or
 ryde.

I moot go thider as I have to go.'
 'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt
 nat so,' 750

Seyde this other hasardour anon;
 'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint
 Iohn!

Thou spak right now of thilke traitour
 Deeth,

That in this contree alle our frendes
 sleeth.

Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his
 aspye, 755

Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
 By god, and by the holy sacrament!

For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false
 theef!'

'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be
 so leef 760
 To finde Deeth, turne up this croked
 wey,
 For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing
 hyde.
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him
 finde. 765
 God save yow, that boghte agayn man-
 kinde,
 And yow amende!'—thus seyde this
 olde man.
 And everich of thise ryoutoures ran,
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they
 founde
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
 Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem
 thoughte. 771
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they
 soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that
 sighte,
 For that the florins been so faire and
 brighte,
 That doun they sette hem by this prec-
 ious hord. 775
 The worste of hem he spake the firste
 word.
 'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I
 seye;
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde
 and pleye.
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and Iolitee our lyf to liven, 780
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we
 spende.
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this
 place
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is
 oures— 786
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves
 stronge, 789
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge.
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
 Wherefore I rede that cut among us alle

Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol
 falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte
 blythe 795
 Shal renne to the toun, and that ful
 swythe,
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly
 This tresor well; and, if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor
 carie 800
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his
 fest,
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it
 wol falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
 And forth toward the toun he wente
 anon. 805
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that
 other,
 'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne
 brother,
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet
 plentee, 811
 That shal departed been among us three.
 But natheles, if I can shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to
 thee?' 815
 That other answerde, 'I noot how that
 may be;
 He woot how that the gold is with us
 tweye,
 What shal we doon, what shal we to him
 seye?'
 'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firste
 shrewe,
 'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
 What we shal doon, and bringe it wel
 aboute.' 821
 'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of
 doute,
 That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat
 biwreye.'
 'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost
 wel we be tweye,
 And two of us shul strengre be than
 oon. 825
 Look whan that he is set, and right anon

Arys, as though thou woldest with him
 pleye;
 And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes
 tweye
 Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in
 game,
 And with thy dagger look thou do the
 same; 830
 And than shal al this gold departed be,
 My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
 Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at our owene
 wille.
 And thus accorded been these shrewes
 tweye 835
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me
 seye.
 This yongest, which that wente un-to
 the toun,
 Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of these florins newe and
 brighte.
 'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I
 mighte 840
 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
 Ther is no man that liveth under the
 trone
 Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!'
 And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
 Putte in his thought that he shold poyson
 beye, 845
 With which he mighte sleen his felawes
 tweye;
 For-why the feend fond him in swich
 lyvinge,
 That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
 For this was outrely his fulle entente
 To sleen hem bothe, and never to re-
 pente. 850
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he
 tarie,
 Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
 And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
 Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes
 quelle;
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde
 y-slawe, 856
 And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he
 mighte,
 On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.
 The pothecarie answerde, 'and thou
 shalt have

A thing that, al-so god my soule save, 860
 In al this world ther nis no creature,
 That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
 Noght but the mountance of a corn of
 whete,
 That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
 Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse
 whyle 865
 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a
 myle;
 This poyson is so strong and violent.'
 This cursed man hath in his hond
 y-hent
 This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
 In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man, 870
 And borwed [of] him large botels three;
 And in the two his poyson poured he;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his
 drinke.
 For al the night he shoop him for to
 swinke 874
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
 And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
 What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
 For right as they had cast his deeth
 bifore, 880
 Right so they han him slayn, and that
 anon.
 And whan that this was doon, thus spak
 that oon,
 'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make
 us merie,
 And afterward we wol his body berie.'
 And with that word it happed him, par
 cas, 885
 To take the botel ther the poyson was,
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke
 also,
 For which anon they storven bothe two.
 But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
 Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,
 Mo wonder signes of empoisoning 891
 Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir
 ending.
 Thus ended been these homicydes two,
 And eek the false empoysoner also.
 O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse! 895
 O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
 Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye

And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
 Allas! mankynde, how may it bityde, 900
 That to thy creatour which that thee
 wroughte,

And with his precious herte-blood thee
 boghte,

Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!

Now, goode men, god forgeve yow
 your trespas,

And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce, 905

Myn holy pardoun may yow alle wayce,

So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges,

Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.

Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!

Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your
 wolle! 910

Your name I entre heer in my rolle
 anon;

In-to the blisse of hevenc shul ye gon;

I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,

Yow that wol offre, as elene and eek as
 cleer

As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I
 preche. 915

And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,

So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;

For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

But sirs, o word forgot I in my tale,
 I have relikes and pardon in my
 male, 920

As faire as any man in Engelond,

Whiche were me yeven by the popes
 hond.

If any of yow wol, of devocioun,

Oftren, and han myn absolucioun,

Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer

adoun, 925

And mekely receyvethe my pardoun:

Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,

Al newe and fresh, at every tonnes ende,

So that ye oftren alwey newe and newe

Nobles and pens, which that be gole and

trewe. 930

It is an honour to everich that is heer,

That ye mowe have a suffisant pardonere

Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,

For adventures which that may bityde.

Peraventure ther may falle oon or

two 935

Down of his hors, and breke his nekke

atwo.

Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
 That I am in your felawship; y-falle,
 That may assoille yow, bothe more and
 lasse,

Whan that the soule shal fro the body
 passe. 940

I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,

For he is most envoluped in sinne.

Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,

And thou shalt kisse the relikes everichon,

Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy
 purs.' 945

'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I
 Cristes curs!

Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so
 theech!

Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old
 breech,

And swere it were a relik of a seint,

Thogh it were with thy fundement de-
 peint! 950

But by the croys which that seint Eleyne
 fond,

I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond

In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;

Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem
 carie;

They shul be shryned in an hogges
 tord.' 955

This pardonere answerde nat a word;

So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he
 seye.

'Now,' quod our host, 'I wol no lenger
 pleye

With thee, ne with noon other angry
 man.'

But right anon the worthy knight
 bigan, 960

Whan that he saugh that al the peple
 lough,

'Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;

Sir pardonere, be glad and mery of
 chere;

And ye, sir host, that been to me so
 dere,

I prey yow that ye kisse the par-
 donere. 965

And pardonere, I prey thee, drawe thee
 neer,

And, as we diden, lat us laughe and
 pleye.'

Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye.

Here is ended the Pardoner's Tale.

GROUP D.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

'EXPERIENCE, though noon auctoritee
 Were in this world, were right y-nough
 to me
 To speke of wo that is in mariage;
 For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of
 age,
 Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve, 5
 Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had
 fyve;
 For I so ofte have y-wedded he;
 And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
 But me was told certeyn, nat longe agon
 is,
 That sith that Crist ne wente never but
 onis 10
 To weddyng in the Cane of Galilee,
 That by the same ensample taughte he
 me
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
 Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for
 the nones
 Besyde a welle Iesus, god and man, 15
 Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:
 "Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes,"
 quod he,
 "And thilke man, the which that hath
 now thee,
 Is noght thyn housbond;" thus seyde he
 certeyn;
 What that he mente ther-by, I can nat
 seyn; 20
 But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
 Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?
 How manye mighte she have in mariage?
 Yet herde I never tellen in myn age
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun; 25
 Men may devyne and glosen up and
 down.
 But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplye;
 That gentil text can I wel understonde.
 Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn hous-
 bond 30
 Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;
 But of no nombre mencion made he,
 Of bigamye or of octogamye;

Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?
 Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salo-
 mon; 35
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;
 As, wolde god, it lefevel were to me
 To be refresshed half so ofte as he!
 Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his
 wyvis!
 No man hath swich, that in this worlde
 alyve is. 40
 God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
 The firste night had many a mery fit
 With ech of hem, so wel was him on
 lyve!
 Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!
 Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he
 shal. 45
 For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in
 al;
 Whan myn housbond is fro the world
 y-gon,
 Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;
 For thanne thapostle seith, that I am free
 To wedde, a goddes half, wher it lyketh
 me. 50
 He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;
 Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.
 What rekketh me, thogh folk seye
 vileinye
 Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?
 I woot wel Abraham was an holy man, 55
 And Iacob eek, as ferforth as I can;
 And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than
 two;
 And many another holy man also.
 Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,
 That hye god defended mariage 60
 By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;
 Or wher comanded he virginitee?
 I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
 Thapostel, whan he speketh of mayden-
 hede;
 He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he
 noon. 65
 Men may conseilte a womman to been
 oon,
 But conseillich is no comandement;
 He putte it in our owene lugement.

For hadde god comanded maydenhede,
 Thanne hadde he dampned wedding
 with the dede; 70

And certes, if ther were no seed y-sowe,
 Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?
 Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste
 A thing of which his maister yaf noon
 heste.

The dart is set up for virginitee; 75
 Cacche who so may, who renneth best
 lat see.

But this word is nat take of every
 wight,

But ther as god list give it of his might.
 I woot wel, that thapostel was a mayde;
 But natheless, thogh that he wroot and
 sayde, 80

He wolde that every wight were swich as
 he,

Al nis but conseil to virginitee;
 And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve
 Of indulgence; so it is no repreve
 To wedde me, if that my make dye, 85
 With-oute excepcioun of bigamy.

Al were it good no womman for to
 touche,

He mente as in his bed or in his couche;
 For peril is bothe fyr and tow tasseble;
 Ye knowe what this ensample may re-
 semble. 90

This is al and som, he heeld virginitee
 More parfit than wedding in freletee.
 Freeltee clepe I; but-if that he and she
 Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

I graunte it wel, I have noon envye, 95
 Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy;
 Hem lyketh to be clene, body and goost,
 Of myn estaat I nil nat make no boost.
 For wel ye knowe, a lord in his hous-
 hold,

He hath nat every vessel al of gold; 100
 Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord
 serve.

God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,
 And everich hath of god a propre yifte,
 Som this, som that, — as him lyketh
 shifte.

Virginitee is greet perfeccioun, 105
 And continence eek with devocioun.
 But Crist, that of perfeccioun is wele,
 Bad nat every wight he sholde go selle
 All that he hadde, and give it to the
 pore,

And in swich wyse folwe him and his
 fore. 110

He spak to hem that wolde live parfitly;
 And lordinges, by your leve, that am
 nat I.

I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age
 In the actes and in fruit of mariage.

Telle me also, to what conclusioun 115
 Were membres maad of generacioun,
 And for what profit was a wight y-wrought?
 Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad
 for noht.

Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up
 and doun,

That they were maked for purgacioun 120
 Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale
 Were eek to knowe a femele from a
 male,

And for noon other cause: sey ye no?
 The experience woot wel it is noht so;
 So that the clerkes be nat with me
 wrothe, 125

I sey this, that they maked been for
 bothe,

This is to seye, for office, and for ese
 Of engendrure, ther we nat god displese.
 Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,
 That man shal yelde to his wyf hir
 dette? 130

Now wher-with sholde he make his paye-
 ment,

If he ne used his sely instrument?
 Than were they maad up-on a creature,
 To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.

But I seye noht that every wight is
 holde, 135

That hath swich harneys as I to yow
 tolde,

To goon and usen hem in engendrure;
 Than sholde men take of chastitee no
 cure.

Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,
 And many a seint, sith that the world
 bigan, 140

Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.
 I nil envye no virginitee;

Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle
 can, 145

Our lord Iesu refreshed many a man.
 In swich estaat as god hath cleped us
 I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.

In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument
 As frely as my maker hath it sent. 150
 If I be daungerous, god yeve me sorwe!
 Myn housbond shal it have bothe eve
 and morwe,
 Whan that him list com forth and paye
 his dette.
 An housbonde I wol have, I nil nat lette,
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my
 thral 155
 And have his tribulacioun with-al
 Up-on his flesh, whyl that I am his wyf.
 I have the power duringe al my lyf
 Up-on his propre body, and noight he.
 Right thus the apostel tolde it un-to
 me; 160
 And bad our housbondes for to love us
 weel.
 Al this sentence me lyketh every-deel' —
 UP sterte the Pardoner, and that anon,
 'Now dame,' quod he, 'by god and by
 seint Iohn,
 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas!
 I was aboute to wedde a wyf; alas! 166
 What sholde I bye it on my flesh so
 dere?
 Yet hadde I lever wedde no wyf to-yere!'
 'Abyde!' quod she, 'my tale is nat
 bigonne;
 Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne
 Er that I go, shal savoure wors than
 ale. 171
 And whan that I have told thee forth my
 tale
 Of tribulacioun in mariage,
 Of which I am expert in al myn age,
 This to seyn, my-self have been the
 whippe; — 175
 Than maystow chese whether thou wolt
 sippe
 Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.
 Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;
 For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten.
 Who-so that nil be war by othere men,
 By him shul othere men corrected be.
 The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;
 Rede in his Almageste, and take it
 there.'
 'Dame, I wolde pray yow, if your wil
 it were,'
 Seyde this Pardoner, 'as ye bigan, 185
 Telle forth your tale, spareth for no man,

And teche us yonge men of your prak-
 tike.'
 'Gladly,' quod she, 'sith it may yow
 lyke.
 But yet I praye to al this companye,
 If that I speke after my fantasye, 190
 As taketh not a-grief of that I seye;
 For myn entente nis but for to pleye.
 Now sires, now wol I telle forth my
 tale.—
 As ever mote I drinken wyn or ale,
 I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes that I
 hadde, 195
 As three of hem were gode and two were
 badde.
 The three men were gode, and riche,
 and olde;
 Unnethe mighte they the statut holde
 In which they were bounden un-to me.
 Ye woot wel what I mene of this, par-
 dee! 200
 As help me god, I laughe whan I thinke
 How pitously a-night I made hem
 swinke;
 And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.
 They had me yeven hir gold and hir
 tresoor;
 Me neded nat do lenger diligence 205
 To winne hir love, or doon hem rever-
 ence.
 They loved me so wel, by god above,
 That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love!
 A wys womman wol sette hir ever in oon
 To gete hir love, ther as she hath noon.
 But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn
 hond, 211
 And sith they hadde me yeven all hir
 lond,
 What sholde I taken hede hem for to
 plese,
 But it were for my profit and myn ese?
 I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey, 215
 That many a night they songen "weila-
 wey!"
 The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,
 That som men han in Essex at Dun-
 mowe.
 I governed hem so wel, after my lawe,
 That ech of hem ful blisful was and
 fawe 220
 To bringe me gaye thinges fro the fayre.
 They were ful glad whan I spak to hem
 fayre;

For god it woot, I chidde hem spitously.

Now herkneth, how I bar me proprely,
Ye wyse wyves, that can understonde.

Thus shal ye speke and bere hem
wrong on honde; 226

For half so boldely can ther no man
Swere and lyen as a womman can.

I sey nat this by wyves that ben wyse,
But-if it be whan they hem misayvse, 230
A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,
Shal beren him on hond the cow is
wood,

And take wisse of hir owene mayde
Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.

'Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array?

Why is my neighbores wyf so gay? 236

She is honoured over-al ther she goth;

I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.

What dostow at my neighbores hous?

Is she so fair? artow so amorous? 240

What rowneye with our mayde? *benedicite!*

Sir olde lechour, lat thy Iapes be!

And if I have a gossib or a freend,

With-outen gilt, thou chydest as a feend,

If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous!

Thou comest hoom as dronken as a
mous, 246

And prechest on thy bench, with yvel
preef!

Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief

To wedde a povre womman, for costage;

And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,

Than seistow that it is a tormentrye 251

To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye.

And if that she be fair, thou verray
knave,

Thou seyst that every holour wol hir
have;

She may no whyle in chastitee abyde,

That is assailed up-on ech a syde. 256

Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for
richesse,

Somme for our shap, and somme for our
fairnesse;

And som, for she can outhir singe or
daunce,

And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce;

Som, for hir handes and hir armes
smale; 261

Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale.

Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-
wal;

It may so longe assailed been over-al.

And if that she be foul, thou seist that
she 265

Coveiteth every man that she may se;

For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,

Til that she finde som man hir to chepe;

Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the
lake,

As, seistow, that wol been with-oute
make. 270

And seyst, it is an hard thing for to
welde

A thing that no man wol, his thanks,
helde.

Thus seistow, lorel, whan thou goost to
bedde;

And that no wys man nedeth for to
wedde, 274

Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevene.

With wilde thonder-dint and firy leveve

Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!

Thow seyst that dropping houses, and
eek smoke,

And chyding wyves, maken men to flee

Out of hir owene hous; a! *benedicite!*

What cyleth swich an old man for to
chyde? 281

Thow seyst, we wyves wol our vyces
hyde

Til we be fast, and than we wol hem
shewe;

Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!

Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and
houndes, 285

They been assayed at diverse stoundes;

Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,

Spones and stoles, and al swich hous-
bondrye,

And so been pottes, clothes, and array;

But folk of wyves maken noon assay 290

Til they be wedded; olde dotard shrewe!

And than, seistow, we wol oure vices
shewe.

Thou seist also, that it displeseth me

But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,

And but thou poure alwey up-on my
face, 295

And clepe me "faire dame" in every
place;

And but thou make a feste on thilke day

That I was born, and make me fresh and
gay,

And but thou do to my norice honour

And to my chamberere with-inne my
bour, 300

And to my fadres folk and his allyes; —
Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!

And yet of our apprentice Ianekyn,
For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,
And for he squiereth me bothe up and
doun, 305

Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun;
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed
to-morwe.

But tel me this, why hydestow, with
sorwe,

The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee. 310
What wenestow make an idiot of our
dame?

Now by that lord, that called is seint Iame,
Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou
were wood,

Be maister of my body and of my good;
That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne
yën; 315

What nedeth thee of me to enquere or
spyën?

I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy
chiste!

Thou sholdest seye, "wyf, go wher thee
liste,

Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talis;
I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame
Alis." 320

We love no man that taketh kepe or
charge

Wher that we goon, we wol ben at our
large.

Of alle men y-blessed moot he be,
The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,
That seith this proverbe in his Alma-
geste, 325

"Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,
That rekketh never who hath the world
in honde."

By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,
Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee recche
or care

How merily that othere folkes fare? 330
For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,

Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.
He is to greet a nigard that wol werne
A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;
He shal have never the lasse light,
pardee; 335

Have thou y-nough, thee thar nat pleyne
thee.

Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array,
That it is peril of our chastitee;

And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce
thee, 340

And seye thise wordes in the apostles
name,

"In habit, maad with chastitee and
shame,

Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod
he,

"And noght in tressed heer and gay
perree, 344

As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche;"
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche

I wol nat wireche as muchel as a gnat.
Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;

For who-so wolde senge a cattes skin,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his
in; 350

And if the cattes skin be slyk and gay,
She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,

But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,
To shewe hir skin, and goon a-cater-
wawed;

This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe, 355
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.

Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to
spyën?

Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hun-
dred yën,

To be my warde-cors, as he can best,
In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me
lest; 360

Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I
thee.

Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges
three,

The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the
ferthe;

O leve sir shrewe, Iesu shorte thy lyf! 365
Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf

Y-rekened is for oon of thise meschances.
Ben ther none othere maner resem-
blances

That ye may lykne your parables to,
But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho? 370

Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,
To bareyne lond, ther water may not
dwelle.

Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath
 desyr
 To consume every thing that brent wol
 be. 375
 Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende
 a tree,
 Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde;
 This knowe they that been to wyves
 bonde.
 Lordinges, right thus, as ye have un-
 derstonde,
 Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on
 honde, 380
 That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;
 And al was fals, but that I took wisse
 On Ianekin and on my nece also.
 O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,
 Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne! 385
 For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.
 I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,
 Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.
 Who-so that first to mille comth, first
 grint; 389
 I pleynd first, so was our werre y-stint.
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful
 blyve
 Of thing of which they never agilte hir
 lyve.
 Of wenchis wolde I beren him on
 honde,
 Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he
 stonde.
 Yet tickled it his herte, for that he 395
 Wende that I hadde of him so greet
 chiertee.
 I swoor that al my walkinge out by nighte
 Was for tespye wenchis that he dighte;
 Under that colour hadde I many a mirthe.
 For al swich wit is yeven us in our
 birthe; 400
 Deceite, weping, spinning god hath yive
 To wommen kindly, whyl they may live.
 And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
 Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech de-
 gree,
 By sleighte, or force, or by som maner
 thing, 405
 As by continuel murmur or grucching;
 Namely a-bedde hadden they mes-
 chaunce,
 Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no
 plesaunce;

I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
 If that I felte his arm over my syde, 410
 Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;
 Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee.
 And ther-fore every man this tale I telle,
 Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle.
 With empty hand men may none haukes
 lure; 415
 For winning wolde I al his lust endure,
 And make me a feyned appetyt;
 And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt;
 That made me that ever I wolde hem
 chyde.
 For thogh the pope had seten hem
 biside, 420
 I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.
 For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for
 word.
 As help me verray god omnipotent,
 Thogh I right now sholde make my
 testament,
 I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit.
 I broghte it so aboute by my wit, 426
 That they moste yeve it up, as for the
 beste;
 Or elles hadde we never been in reste.
 For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,
 Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun. 430
 Thanne wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak
 keep
 How mekely loketh Wilkinoure sheep;
 Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy
 cheke!
 Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,
 And han a swete spyced conscience. 435
 Sith ye so preche of lobes pacience.
 Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;
 And but ye do, certain we shal yow teche
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.
 Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees;
 And sith a man is more resonable 441
 Than womman is, ye moste been suffra-
 ble.
 What eyleth yow to grucche thus and
 grone?
 Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?
 Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel; 445
 Peter! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel!
 For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,
 I coude walke as fresh as is a rose;
 But I wol kepe it for your owene tooth.
 Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow
 sooth.' 450

Swiche maner wordes hadde we on
honde.

Now wol I speken of my fourthe hous-
bonde.

My fourthe housbonde was a revelour,
This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour;
And I was yong and ful of ragerye, 455
Stiborn and strong, and Ioly as a pyc.
Wel coude I daunce to an harpe smale,
And singe, y-wis, as any nightingale,
When I had dronke a draughte of swete
wyn.

Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn, 460
That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,
For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been
his wyf,

He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke;
And, after wyn, on Venus moste I thinke:
For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous
tayl. 466

In womman vinolent is no defence,
This knowen lechours by experience.

But, lord Crist! whan that it remem-
breth me

Up-on my yowthe, and on my Iolitee, 470
It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.

Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote
That I have had my world as in my tyme.
But age, allas! that al wol envynyme,
Hath me biraft my beautee and my
pith; 475

Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith!
The flour is goon, ther is na-more to
telle,

The bren, as I best can, now moste I
selle;

But yet to be right mery wol I fonde.
Now wol I tellen of my fourthe hous-
bonde. 480

I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt
That he of any other had delyt.
But he was quit, by god and by seint Iocce!
I made him of the same wode a croce;
Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485
But certainly, I made folk swich chere,
That in his owene grece I made him
frye

For angre, and for verray Ialousye.
By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,
For which I hope his soule be in glorie.
For god it woot, he sat ful ofte and
song 491

Whan that his shoo ful bitterly him
wrong.

Ther was no wight, save god and he, that
wiste,

In many wyse, how sore I him twiste.
He deyle whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,
Al is his tombe noght so curious 497
As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,
Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
It nis but wast to burie him preciously.
Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule
reste, 501

He is now in the grave and in his chestre.
Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.
God lete his soule never come in helle!
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe;
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe, 506
And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.

But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
And ther-with-al so wel coude he me
glose,

Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*, 510
That thogh he hadde me bet on every
boon,

He coude winne agayn my love anon.
I trowe I loved him beste, for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me.

We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye,
In this matere a queynte fantasye; 516
Wayte what thing we may nat lightly
have,

Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.
Forbede us thing, and that desyren we;
Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we
flee. 520

With daunger oute we al our chaffare;
Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys;
This knoweth every womman that is wys.

My fifthe housbonde, god his soule
blesse! 525
Which that I took for love and no
richesse,

He som-tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
And had left scole, and wente at hoom
to bord

With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,
God have hir soule! hir name was Ali-
soun. 530

She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I
thee!

To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.
 For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
 Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his
 lyf, 535
 To hir, and to another worthy wyf,
 And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
 I wolde han told his conseil every-deel.
 And so I dide ful often, god it woot,
 That made his face ful often reed and
 hoot 540
 For verray shame, and blamed him-self
 for he
 Had told to me so greet a privetee.
 And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
 (So often tymes I to my gossib wente,
 For ever yet I lovede to be gay, 545
 And for to walke, in March, Averille, and
 May,
 Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),
 That Iankin clerk, and my gossib deme
 Alis,
 And I my-self, in-to the felde wente.
 Myn housbond was at London al that
 Lente; 550
 I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
 And for to see, and eek for to be seye
 Of lusty folk; what wiste I wher my
 grace
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns, 555
 To vigilies and to processions,
 To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,
 To pleyes of miracles and mariages,
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
 Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise
 mytes, 560
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
 And wostow why? for they were used
 weel.
 Now wol I tellen forth what happed
 me.
 I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,
 Til trewely we hadde swich daliance, 565
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
 I spak to him, and seyde him, how that
 he,
 If I were widwe, sholde wedde me.
 For certainly, I sey for no bobance,
 Yet was I never withouten purveyance
 Of mariage, nof othere thinges eek. 571
 I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,
 That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
 And if that faille, thanne is al y-do.

I bar him on honde, he hadde en-
 chanted me; 575
 My dame taughte me that soultitee.
 And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night;
 He wolde han slayn me as I lay up-right,
 And al my bed was ful of verray blood,
 And yet I hope that he shal do me good;
 For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was
 taught. 581
 And al was fals, I dremed of it right
 naught,
 But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
 As wel of this as of othere thinges more.
 But now sir, lat me see, what I shal
 seyn? 585
 A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn.
 Whan that my fourthe housbond was
 on bere,
 I weep algate, and made sory chere,
 As wyves moten, for it is usage,
 And with my coverchief covered my vis-
 age; 590
 But for that I was purveyed of a make,
 I weep but smal, and that I undertake.
 To chirche was myn housbond born
 a-morwe
 With neighbores, that for him maden
 sorwe;
 And Iankin oure clerk was oon of tho
 As help me god, whan that I saugh him
 go 596
 After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a
 paire
 Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,
 That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.
 He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old,
 And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;
 But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.
 Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me
 weel; 604
 I hadde the prente of seynt Venus seel.
 As help me god, I was a lusty oon,
 And faire and riche, and yong, and wel
 bigoon;
 And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde
 me,
 I had the beste *quoniam* mighte be.
 For certes, I am al Venerien
 In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien. 610
 Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
 And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.
 Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars ther-
 inne.

Allas! alas! that ever love was sinne!
 I folwed ay myn inclinacioun 615
 By vertu of my constellacioun;
 That made me I coude nought withdrawe
 My chambre of Venus from a good
 felawe.

Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
 And also in another privee place. 620
 For, god so wis be my savacioun,
 I ne loved never by no discrecioun
 But ever folwede myn appetyt,
 Al were he short or long, or blak or
 whyt;

I took no kepe, so that he lyked me, 625
 How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.

What sholde I seye, but, at the
 monthes ende,

This Ioly clerk Iankin, that was so hende,
 Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,
 And to him yaf I al the lond and fee 630
 That ever was me yeven ther-bifore;
 But afterward repented me full sore.
 He nolde suffre nothing of my list.

By god, he smoot me ones on the list,
 For that I rente out of his book a leef,
 That of the strook myn ere wex al deaf.
 Stiborn I was as is a leonesse, 637

And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse,
 And walke I wolde, as I had doon bi-
 forn,

From hous to hous, al-though he had it
 sworn. 640

For which he often tymes wolde preche,
 And me of olde Romayn gestes teche,
 How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefte his
 wyf,

And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,
 Nought but for open-heeded he hir say
 Lokinge out at his dore upon a day. 646

Another Romayn tolde he me by name,
 That, for his wyf was at a someres game
 With-oute his witing, he forsook hir eke.
 And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke
 That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste, 651
 Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste,
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule
 aboute;

Than wolde he seye right thus, with-ouden
 doute,

“Who-so that buildeth his hous al of
 salwes, 655
 And priketh his blinde hors over the
 falwes,

And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
 Is worthy to been hanged on the
 galwes!”

But al for nought, I sette nought an hawe
 Of his proverbes nof his olde sawe, 660
 Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be.

I hate him that my vices telleth me,
 And so do mo, god woot! of us than I.
 Thus made him with me wood al outrely;
 I nolde nought forbere him in no cas. 665
 Now wol I seye yow sooth, by seint
 Thomas,

Why that I rente out of his book a leef,
 For which he smoot me so that I was
 deaf.

He hadde a book that gladly, night
 and day,

For his desport he wolde rede alway. 670
 He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,
 At whiche book he lough alwey ful
 faste.

And eek ther was som-tyme a clerk at
 Rome,

A cardinal, that highte Seint Ierome,
 That made a book agayn Iovinian; 675
 In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,
 Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,
 That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys;
 And eek the Parables of Salomon,

Ovydes Art, and bokes many on, 680
 And alle these wer bounden in o volume.
 And every night and day was his custome,
 Whan he had leysur and vacacioun
 From other worldly occupacioun, 684
 To reden on this book of wikked wyves.

He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
 Than been of gode wyves in the Bible.

For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
 That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
 But-if it be of holy seintes lyves, 690
 Ne of noon other womman never the mo.

Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?
 By god, if wommen hadde writen stories,
 As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,
 They wolde han writen of men more wik-
 kednesse 695

Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.
 The children of Mercurie and of Venus
 Been in hir wirking ful contrarious;
 Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispence. 700
 And, for hir diverse disposicioun,
 Ech falleth in others exaltacioun;

And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat
 In Pisces, wher Venus is axaltat;
 And Venus falleth wher Mercurie is
 reysed; 705
 Therefore no womman of no clerk is
 preysed.
 The clerk, whan he is old, and may
 noght do
 Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
 Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
 That wommen can nat kepe hir mariage!
 But now to purpos, why I tolde thee 711
 That I was beten for a book, pardee.
 Up-on a night Iankin, that was our syre,
 Redde on his book, as he sat by the fyre,
 Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse, 715
 Was al mankinde broght to wrecched-
 nesse.
 For which that Iesu Crist him-self was
 slayn,
 That boghte us with his herte-blood
 agayn.
 Lo, here expres of womman may ye finde,
 That womman was the los of al man-
 kinde. 720
 Tho redde he me how Sampson loste
 his heres,
 Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir
 sheres;
 Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe
 his yēn.
 Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat
 lyen,
 Of Hercules and of his Dianyre, 725
 That caused him to sette himself a-fyre.
 No-thing forgat he the penaunce and
 wo
 That Socrates had with hise wyves two;
 How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his
 heed;
 This sely man sat stille, as he were
 deed; 730
 He wyped his heed, namore dorste he
 seyn
 But "er that thonder stinte, comth a
 reyn."
 Of Phasipha, that was the quene of
 Crete,
 For shrewednesse, him thoughte the tale
 swete;
 Fy! spek na-more — it is a grisly thing —
 Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking. 736
 Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,

That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,
 He redde it with ful good devocioun.
 He tolde me eek for what occasioun
 Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf; 741
 Myn housbond hadde a legende of his
 wyf,
 Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
 Hath prively un-to the Grekes told
 Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a
 place, 745
 For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.
 Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,
 They bothe made hir housbondes for to
 dye;
 That oon for love, that other was for
 hate;
 Lyma hir housbond, on an even late, 750
 Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo.
 Lucya, likerous, loved hir housbond so,
 That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir
 thinke,
 She yaf him swich a maier love-drinke,
 That he was deed, er it were by the
 morwe; 755
 And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.
 Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius
 Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,
 That in his gardin growed swich a tree,
 On which, he seyde, how that his wyves
 three 760
 Hanged hem-self for herte despitous.
 "O leve brother," quod this Arrius,
 "Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
 And in my gardin planted shal it be!"
 Of latter date, of wyves hath he red,
 That somme han slayn hir housbondes in
 hir bed, 766
 And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the
 night
 Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-
 right.
 And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn
 Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han
 hem slayn. 770
 Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir
 drinke.
 He spak more harm than herte may
 bitinke.
 And ther-with-al, he knew of, mo pro-
 verbes
 Than in this world ther growen gras or
 herbes.
 "Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun 775

Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usinge for to chyde.
Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf down in the
hous;

They been so wikked and contrarious;
They haten that hir housbondes loveth
ay." 781

He seyde, "a womman cast hir shame
away,

Whan she cast of hir smok;" and
forther-mo,

"A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose." 785
Who wolde wenen, or who wolde sup-
pose

The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?
And whan I saugh he wolde never
fyne

To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeynly three leves have I plight
Out of this book, right as he radde, and
eke, 791

I with my fist so took him on the cheke,
That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun.
And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,
And with his fist he smoot me on the
heed, 795

That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
And when he saugh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde han fled his
way,

Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde:
"O! hastow slayn me, false theef?" I
seyde, 800

"And for my land thus hastow mordred
me?

Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee."
And neer he cam, and kneled faire
adoun,

And seyde, "dere suster Alisoun,
As help me god, I shal thee never
smyte; 805

That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.
Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke"—
And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the
cheke,

And seyde, "theef, thus muchel am I
wreke;

Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke."
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,
We fille acorded, by us selven two. 812
He yaf me al the byrdel in myn hond

To han the governaunce of hous and
lond,
And of his tonge and of his hond also,
And made him brenne his book anon
right tho. 816

And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,
By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,
And that he seyde, "myn owene trewe
wyf,

Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf,
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn
estaat"— 821

After that day we hadden never debaat.
God help me so, I was to him as kinde
As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,
And also trewe, and so was he to me.
I prey to god that sit in magestee, 826
So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here.'

*Biholde the wordes between the Somon-
our and the Frere.*

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd
al this,

'Now, dame,' quod he, 'so have I loye or
blis, 830

This is a long preamble of a tale!
And whan the Somnour herde the Frere
gale,

'Lo!' quod the Somnour, 'goddess
armes two!

A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.
Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere 835

Who falle in every dish and eek matere.
What spekestow of preambulacioun?

What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go
sit doun;

Thou lettest our disport in this manere.'
'Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?' quod
the Frere, 840

'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,
Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,
That alle the folk shal laughen in this
place.'

'Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy
face,'

Quod this Somnour, 'and I bishrewe me,
But-if I telle tales two or thre 846

Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,
That I shal make thyn herte for to
morne;

For wel I woot thy pacience is goon.
 Our hoste cryde 'pees! and that
 anon!' 850
 And seyde, 'lat the womman telle hir
 tale.
 Ye fare as folk that dronken been of
 ale.

Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is
 best.
 'Al redy, sir,' quod she, 'right as yow
 lest,
 If I have licence of this worthy Frere.'
 'Vis, dame,' quod he, 'tel forth, and I
 wol here.' 856

Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe.

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

*Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of
 Bathe.*

IN tholde dayes of the king Arthour,
 Of which that Britons speken greet hon-
 our,
 Al was this land fulfilled of fayerye. 859
 The elf-queene, with hir Ioly companye,
 Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
 But now can no man see none elves mo.
 For now the grete charitee and pray-
 eres 865
 Of limitours and othere holy freres,
 That serchen every lond and every stream,
 As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
 Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes,
 boures,
 Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures, 870
 Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,
 This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
 Ther walketh now the limitour him-self
 In undermeles and in morweninges, 875
 And seyth his matins and his holy thinges
 As he goth in his limitacioun.
 Wommen may go sauly up and down,
 In every bush, or under every tree;
 There is noon other incubus but he, 880
 And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.
 And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor,
 That on a day cam rydinge fro river;
 And happed that, allone as she was
 born, 885
 He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,
 Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
 By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;

For which oppressioun was swich clamour
 And swich pursute un-to the king Ar-
 thour, 890
 That dampned was this knight for to be
 deed
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his
 heed
 Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
 But that the quene and othere ladies mo
 So longe preyeden the king of grace, 895
 Til he his lyf him graunted in the place,
 And yaf him to the quene al at hir
 wille,
 To chese, whether she wolde him save or
 spille.
 The quene thanketh the king with al
 her might,
 And after this thus spak she to the
 knight, 900
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a
 day:
 'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich
 array,
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
 I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me
 What thing is it that wommen most de-
 syren? 905
 Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from
 yren.
 And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and
 lere
 An answer suffisant in this matere. 910
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou
 pace,
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.'
 Wo was this knight and sorwefully he
 syketh;

But what! he may nat do al as him lyk-
eth.

And at the laste, he chees him for to
wende, 915

And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
With swich answeere as god wolde him
purveye;

And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth
his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace, 920

To lerne, what thing women loven most;
But he ne coude arryven in no cost,

Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere
Two creatures accordinge in-fere.

Somme seyde, wommen loven best
richesse, 925

Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde,
Iolynesse;

Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust
abedde,

And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been
most esed,

Whan that we been y-flatered and
y-pled. 930

He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;

And with attendance, and with bisnesse,
Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.

And somme seyn, how that we loven
best 935

For to be free, and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,

But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing
nyce.

For twrely, ther is noon of us alle, 939
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,

That we nil kike, for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.

For be we never so vicious with-inne,
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of
sinne.

And somme seyn, that greet delyt han
we 945

For to ben holden stable and eek secrece,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,

And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;

Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing
hele; 950

Witnesse on Myda; wol ye here the tale?
Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,

Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,
The which vyce he hidde, as he best
might, 955

Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo.

He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;
He preyede hir, that to no creature

She sholde tellen of his disfigure. 960
She swoor him 'nay, for al this world
to winne,

She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a
name;

She nolde nat telle it for hir owene
shame.'

But nathelees, hir thoughte that she
dyde, 965

That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir
herte,

That nedely som word hir moste asterte;
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,

Doun to a mareys faste by she ran; 970
Til she cam there, hir herte was a-fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,

She leyde hir mouth un-to the water
doun:

'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy
soun,'

Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and
namo; 975

Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;

I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'
Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,

Yet out it moot, we can no conseil
hyde; 980

The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.

This knight, of which my tale is spe-
cially,

Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come
therby,

This is to seye, what wommen loven
moost, 985

With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the
goost;

But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat so-
iourne.

The day was come, that hoomward moste
he tourne,

And in his wey it happed him to ryde,

In al this care, under a forest-syde, 990
 Wher-as he saugh up-on a daunce go
 Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
 Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful
 yerne,
 In hope that som wisdom sholde he
 lerne.
 But certainly, er he came fully there, 995
 Vanished was this daunce, he niste
 where.
 No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
 Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a
 wyf;
 A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
 Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan
 ryse, 1000
 And seyde, 'sir knight, heer-forth ne
 lyth no wey.
 'Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?
 Paraventure it may the bettre be;
 Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod
 she.
 'My leve mooder,' quod this knight
 certeyn, 1005
 'I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn
 What thing it is that women most
 desyre;
 Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte
 your hyre.'
 'Plichte me thy trouthe, heer in myn
 hand,' quod she,
 'The nexte thing that I requere thee, 1010
 Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might;
 And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'
 'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight,
 'I grante.'
 'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel
 avante, 1014
 Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,
 Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I.
 Lat see which is the proudeste of hem
 alle,
 That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
 That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee
 teche;
 Lat us go forth with-ouen lenger speche.'
 Tho rounded she a pistel in his ere, 1021
 And bad him to be glad, and have no
 fere.
 Whan they be comen to the court, this
 knight
 Seyde, 'he had holde his day, as he
 hadde hight,

And redy was his answer,' as he sayde.
 Ful many a noble wyf, and many a
 mayde, 1026
 And many a widwe, for that they ben
 wyse,
 The quene hir-self sittinge as a Iustyse,
 Assembled been, his answer for to here;
 And afterward this knight was bode
 appere. 1030
 To every wight comanded was silence,
 And that the knight sholde telle in audi-
 ence,
 What thing that worldly women loven
 best.
 This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a
 best,
 But to his questioun anon answerde 1035
 With manly voys, that al the court it
 herde:
 'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
 'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
 As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
 And for to been in maistrie him above;
 This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me
 kille, 1041
 Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'
 In al the court ne was ther wyf ne
 mayde,
 Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,
 But seyden, 'he was worthy han his lyf.'
 And with that word up stirte the olde
 wyf, 1046
 Which that the knight saugh sittinge in
 the grene:
 'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady
 quene!
 Er that your court departe, do me right.
 I taughte this answer un-to the knight;
 For which he plichte me his trouthe
 there, 1051
 The firste thing I wolde of him requere,
 He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.
 Bifore the court than preyed I thee, sir
 knight,'
 Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy
 wyf; 1055
 For wel thou wost that I have kept thy
 lyf.
 If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'
 This knigat answerde, 'allas! and
 weylaway!
 I woot right wel that swich was my
 biheste.

For goddes love, as chees a newe re-
queste; 1060

Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'

'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us
bothe two!

For thogh that I be foul, and old, and
pore,

I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,

That under erthe is grave, or lyth
above, 1065

But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'

'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my
dampnacioun!

Allas! that any of my nacioun

Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'

But al for noght, the ende is this, that
he 1070

Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir
wedde;

And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to
bedde.

Now wolden som men seye, paravente-
ture,

That, for my negligence, I do no cure

To tellen yow the Ioye and al tharray

That at the feste was that ilke day. 1076

To whiche thing shortly answer I shal;

I seye, ther nas no Ioye ne feste at al,

Ther nas but hevynesse and muche sorwe;

For prively he wedded hir on a morwe,

And al day after hidde him as an
oule; 1081

So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knight hadde in
his thoght,

Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde
y-broght;

He walweth, and he turne'h to and fro.

His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo, 1086

And seyde, 'o dere housbond, *benedicite!*

Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as
ye?

Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?

Is every knight of his so dangerous? 1090

I am your owene love and eek your wyf;

I am she, which that saved hath your lyf;

And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;

Why fare ye thus with me this firste
night?

Ye faren lyk a man had losí his wit; 1095

What is my giit? for goddes love, tel me
it,

And it shal been amended, if I may.'

'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas!
nay, nay!

It wol nat been amended never mo!

Thou art so loothly, and so old also, 1100

And ther-to comen of so love a kinde,

That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and
winde.

So wolde god myn herte wolde breste!'

'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your
unreste?'

'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder
is.' 1105

'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende
al this,

If that me liste, er it were dayes three,

So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.

But for ye speken of swich gentillesse

As is descended out of old richesse, 1110

That therefore sholden ye be gentil men,

Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.

Loke who that is most vertuuous alway,

Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay

To do the gentil dedes that he can, 1115

And tak him for the grettest gentil man.

Crist wol, we clayme of him our gen-
tillesse,

Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.

For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,

For which we clayme to been of heigh
parage, 1120

Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,

To noon of us hir vertuuous living,

That made hem gentil men y-called be;

And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence,

That highte Dant, speken in this sen-
tence; 1126

Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:

"Ful selde up ryseth by his branches
smale

Prowesse of man, for god, of his good-
nesse,

Wol that of him we clayme our gen-
tillesse;" 1130

For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme

But temporel thing, that man may hurte
and mayme.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,

If gentillesse were planted naturelly

Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,

Privee ne apert, than wolde they never
fyne 1136

To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;

They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste
hous

Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
And lat men shette the dores and go
thenne; 1141

Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
As twenty thousand men mighte it bi-
holde;

His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye. 1145

Heer may ye see wel, how that gen-
terye

Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde.
For, god it woot, men may wel often
finde 1150

A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And nil him-selven do no gentle dedis,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed
is, 1156

He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nis but renomee
Of thye auncestres, for hir heigh boun-
tee, 1160

Which is a strange thing to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone;
Than comth our verray gentillesse of
grace,
It was no-thing biquethe us with our
place.

Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius, 1166
That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,
Ther shul ye seen expres it that no drede
is,

That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis;
And therefore, leve housbond, I thus con-
clude, 1171

Al were it that myne auncestres were
rude,

Yet may the hye god, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to liven vertuously.
Thanne am I gentil, when that I biginne
To liven vertuously and weye sinne.

And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,
The hye god, on whom that we bileve,

In wilful povert chees to live his lyf. 1179
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,
May understonde that Iesus, hevne king,
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.

Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;
This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
Who-so that halt him payd of his pov-
erte, 1185

I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a
sherte.

He that coveyteth is a povre wight,
For he wolde han that is nat in his
might.

But he that noight hath, ne coveyteth
have,

Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a
knaive. 1190

Verray povert, it singeth proprely;
Juvenal seith of povert merily:

"The povre man, whan he goth by the
weye,

Bifore the theves he may singe and
pleye."

Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bringer out of bisnesse;
A greet amender eek of sapience 1197

To him that taketh it in pacience.

Povert is this, although it seme elenge:
Possessioun, that no wight wol challenge.

Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his god and eek him-self to
knowe. 1202

Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes
see.

And therefore, sire, sin that I noight yow
greve, 1205

Of my povert na-more ye me repreve.

Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon
favour, 1210

And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;
And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and
old,

Than drede you noight to been a coke-
wold; 1214

For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee,
Been grete wardleys up-on chastitee.

But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,
I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.

Chees now,' quod she, 'oon of thise
 thinges tweye, 1219
 To han me foul and old til that I deye,
 And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
 And never yow displese in al my lyf,
 Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
 And take your aventure of the repair
 That shal be to your hous, by-cause of
 me, 1225
 Or in som other place, may wel be.
 Now chees your-selven, whether that
 yow lyketh.'
 This knight avyseth him and sore
 syketh,
 But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
 'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,
 I put me in your wyse governance; 1231
 Cheseth your-self, which may be most
 plesance,
 And most honour to yow and me also.
 I do no fors the whether of the two;
 For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.' 1235
 'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,'
 quod she,
 'Sin I may chese, and governe as me
 lest?'
 'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it
 best.'
 'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger
 wrothe;
 For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow
 bothe, 1240

Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
 I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,
 But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
 As ever was wyf, sin that the world was
 newe.
 And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene
 As any lady, emperyce, or quene, 1246
 That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
 Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow
 lest.
 Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'
 And whan the knight saugh verrailly
 al this, 1250
 That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
 For Ioye he hente hir in his armes two,
 His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
 A thousand tyme a-rewhe he gan hir
 kisse.
 And she obeyed him in everything 1255
 That mighte doon him plesance or lyk-
 ing.
 And thus they live, un-to hir lyves
 ende,
 In parfit Ioye; and Iesu Crist us sende
 Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe
 a-bedde,
 And grace toverbyde hem that we
 wedde. 1260
 And eek I preye Iesu shorte hir lyves
 That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
 And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
 God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Freres tale.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere
 He made alwey a maner louring chere
 Upon the Somnour, but for honestee 1267
 No vileyns word as yet to him spak he.
 But atte laste he seyde un-to the Wyf,
 'Dame,' quod he, 'god yeve yow right
 good lyf! 1270
 Ye han heer touched, al-so moot I thee,
 In scole-matere greet difficultee;
 Ye han seyde muchel thing right wel, I
 seye;
 But dame, here as we ryden by the weye,

Us nedeth nat to speken but of
 game, 1275
 And lete auctoritees, on goddes name,
 To preching and to scole eek of clergie.
 But if it lyke to this companye
 I wol yow of a somnour telle a game.
 Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the
 name, 1280
 That of a somnour may no good be
 sayd;
 I pray that noon of you be yvel apayd.
 A somnour is a renner up and doun
 With mandements for fornicacioun,
 And is y-bet at every tounes ende.' 1285

Our host tho spak, 'a! sire, ye sholde
be hende

And curteys, as a man of your estaat;
In company we wol have no debaat.

Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.'

'Nay,' quod the Somnour, 'lat him
seye to me 1290

What so him list; whan it comth to my
lot,

By god, I shal him quyten every grot.
I shal him tellen which a greet honour
It is to be a flateringe limitour;
And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis.'

Our host answerde, 'pees, na-more of
this.' 1296

And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
'Tel forth your tale, leve meister
deere.'

Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere.

THE FRERES TALE.

Here biginneth the Freres tale.

WHILOM ther was dwellinge in my con-
tree

An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree,
That boldely dide execucioun 1301

In punisshinge of fornicacioun,
Of wiccheecraft, and eek of bauderye,

Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments, 1305

Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
And eek of many another maner cryme

Which nedeth nat rehercen at this tyme;
Of usure, and of symonye also.

But certes, lechours dide he grettest
wo; 1310

They sholde singen, if that they were
hente;

An smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.
If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,

Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial
peyne 1314

For smale tythes and for smal offringe,
He made the peple pitously to singe.

For er the bisshop caughte hem with his
hook,

They weren in the erchedeknes book.
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his Iurisdic-
cioun,

Power to doon on hem correccioun. 1320
He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,

A slyer boy was noon in Engeland;
For subtilly he hadde his espaille

That taughte him, wher that him mighte
availle. 1324

He coude spare of lechours oon or two,

To techen him to foure and twenty mo.
For thogh this Somnour wood were as an
hare,

To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;
For we been out of his correccioun;

They han of us no Iurisdiccioun, 1330
Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.

'Peter! so been the wommen of the
styves,'

Quod the Somnour, 'y-put out of my
cure!'

'Pees, with mischance and with mis-
aventure,'

Thus seyde our host, 'and lat him telle
his tale. 1335

Now telleth forth, thogh that the Som-
nour gale,

Ne spareth nat myn owene maister dere.'
This false theef, this Somnour, quod
the Frere,

Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauk to lure in Engeland, 1340

That tolde him al the secree that they
knewe;

For hir acqueyntance was nat come of-
newe.

They weren hise approwours prively;
He took him-self a greet profit therby;

His maister knew nat alwey what he
wan. 1345

With-outen mandement, a lewed man
He coude somne, on peyne of Cristes

curs,
And they were gladde for to fille his
purs,

And make him grete festes atte nale.

And right as Iudas hadde purses smale,
 And was a theef, right swich a theef was
 he; 1351
 His maister hadde but half his duëtee.
 He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,
 A theef, and eek a Somnour, and a
 baude. 1354
 He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
 That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,
 Or lakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,
 That lay by hem, they told it in his ere;
 Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.
 And he wolde fecche a feyned mande-
 ment, 1360
 And somme hem to the chapitre bothe
 two,
 And pile the man, and lete the wenche
 go.
 Thanne wolde he seye, 'frend, I shal for
 thy sake
 Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake;
 Thee thar na-more as in this cas tra-
 vaille; 1365
 I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.'
 Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo
 Than possible is to telle in yeres two.
 For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,
 That can an hurt deer from an hool
 y-knowe, 1370
 Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
 Or an avouter, or a paramour.
 And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,
 Therefore on it he sette al his entente.
 And so bifel, that ones on a day 1375
 This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,
 Rood for to somne a widwe, an old riblybe,
 Feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe.
 And happed that he saugh bifore him ryde
 A gay yeman, under a forest-syde. 1380
 A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and
 kene;
 He hadde up-on a courtepy of grene;
 An hat up-on his heed with frenges blake.
 'Sir,' quod this Somnour, 'hayl! and
 wel a-take!'
 'Wel-come,' quod he, 'and every good
 felawe! 1385
 Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?'
 Seyde this yeman, 'wiltow fer to day?'
 This Somnour him answerde, and seyde,
 'nay;
 Heer faste by,' quod he, 'is myn entente
 To ryden, for to reysen up a rente 1390

That longeth to my lordes duëtee.
 'Artow thanne a bailly?' 'Ye!' quod
 he.
 He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
 Seye that he was a somnour, for the name.
 'Depardieux,' quod this yeman, 'dere
 brother, 1395
 Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
 I am unknowen as in this contree;
 Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee,
 And eek of brotherhede, if that yow leste.
 I have gold and silver in my cheste; 1400
 If that thee happe to comen in our
 shyre,
 Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desyre.'
 'Grantmercy,' quod this Somnour, 'by
 my feith!'
 Everich in otheres hand his trouthe leith,
 For to be sworne bretheren til they
 deye. 1405
 In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.
 This Somnour, which that was as ful of
 Iangles,
 As ful of venim been these variangles,
 And ever enquering up-on every thing,
 'Brother,' quod he, 'where is now your
 dwelling, 1410
 Another day if that I sholde yow seche?'
 This yeman him answerde in softe
 speche,
 'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north con-
 tree,
 Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee
 see.
 Er we departe, I shal thee so wel
 wisse, 1415
 That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse.'
 'Now, brother,' quod this Somnour, 'I
 yow preye,
 Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the
 weye,
 Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,
 Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully 1420
 In myn offyce how I may most winne;
 And spareth nat for conscience ne sinne,
 But as my brother tel me, how do ye?'
 'Now, by my trouthe, brother dere,'
 seyde he,
 'As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale, 1425
 My wages been ful streite and ful smale.
 My lord is hard to me and daungerous,
 And myn offyce is ful laborous;
 And therefore by extorcions I live.

For sothe, I take al that men wol me
yive; 1430
Algate, by sleyghte or by violence,
Fro yeer to yeer I winne al my dispence.
I can no bettre telle feithfully.
'Now, certes,' quod this Somnour, 'so
fare I;
I spare nat to taken, god it woot, 1435
But-if it be to hevy or to hoot.
What I my gete in conseil prively,
No maner conscience of that have I;
Nere myn extorcioun, I mighte nat liven,
Ne of swiche Iapes wol I nat be
shriven. 1440
Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;
I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everichoon.
Wel be we met, by god and by seint Iame!
But, leve brother, tel me than thy name,'
Quod this Somnour; and in this mene-
whyle, 1445
This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.
'Brother,' quod he, 'wiltow that I thee
telle?
I am a feend, my dwelling is in helle.
And here I ryde about my purchasing,
To wite wher men wolde yeve me any
thing. 1450
My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.
Loke how thou rydest for the same en-
tente,
To winne good, thou rekkest never how;
Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now
Un-to the worldes ende for a preye.' 1455
'A,' quod this Somnour, '*benedicite*,
what sey ye?
I wende ye were a yeman trewely.
Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I;
Han ye figure than determinat
In helle, ther ye been in your estat?' 1460
'Nay, certainly,' quod he, 'ther have
we noon;
But whan us lyketh, we can take us oon,
Or elles make yow seme we ben shape
Som-tyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape;
Or lyk an angel can I ryde or go. 1465
It is no wonder thing thogh it be so;
A lousy Iogelour can deceyve thee,
And pardee, yet can I more craft than he.'
'Why,' quod the Somnour, 'ryde ye
thanne or goon 1469
In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?'
'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swich formes
make

As most able is our preyes for to take.'
'What maketh yow to han al this
labour?'
'Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,'
Seyde this feend, 'but alle thing hath
tyme. 1475
The day is short, and it is passed pryme,
And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day.
I wol entende to winnen, if I may,
And nat entende our wittes to declare.
For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare. 1480
To understonde, al-though I tolde hem thee.
But, for thou axest why labouren we;
For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instru-
ments,
And menes to don his comandements,
Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,
In divers art and in divers figures. 1486
With-uten him we have no might, cer-
tyn,
If that him list to stonden ther-agayn.
And som-tyme, at our prayere, han we
leve
Only the body and nat the soule greve;
Witnesse on Iob, whom that we diden
wo. 1491
And som-tyme han we might of bothe two,
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.
And somtyme be we suffred for to seke
Up-on a man, and doon his soule un-
reste, 1495
And nat his body, and al is for the beste.
Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,
It is a cause of his savacioun;
Al-be-it that it was nat our entente
He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde
him hente. 1500
And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,
As to the erchebisshop Seint Dunstan,
And to the apostles servant eek was I.'
'Yet tel me,' quod the Somnour, 'feith-
fully,
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway 1505
Of elements?' the feend answerde, 'nay;
Som-tyme we feyne, and som-tyme we
aryse
With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse,
And speke as renably and faire and wel
As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel. 1510
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he;
I do no fors of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat Iape,
Thou wolt algates wite how we ben shape;

Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother
dere, 1515
Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.
For thou shalt by thyn owene experience
Conne in a chyer rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,
Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve. 1520
For I wol holde companye with thee
Til it be so, that thou forsake me.
'Nay,' quod this Somnour, 'that shal
nat bityde;

I am a yeman, knownen is ful wyde;
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas. 1525
For though thou were the devel Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,
As I am sworn, and ech of us til other
For to be trewe brother in this cas;
And bothe we goon abouten our purchas.
Tak thou thy part, what that men wol
thee yive, 1531
And I shal myn; thus may we bothe live.
And if that any of us have more than
other,
Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his
brother.'

'I graunte,' quod the devel, 'by my
fey.' 1535
And with that word they ryden forth hir
wey.
And right at the entring of the tounes
ende,
To which this Somnour shoop him for to
wende,
They saugh a cart, that charged was with
hey,
Which that a carter droof forth in his
wey. 1540
Deep was the wey, for which the carte
stood.

The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were
wood,
'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye
for the stones?
The feend,' quod he, 'yow fecche body
and bones,
As ferforthly as ever were we foled! 1545
So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!
The devel have al, bothe hors and cart
and hey!'
This Somnour seyde, 'heer shal we
have a play;'
And near the feend he drough, as noght
ne were,

Ful prively, and rouned in his ere: 1550
'Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy
feith;

Herestow nat how that the carter seith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples
three.'

'Nay,' quod the devel, 'god wot, never
a deel; 1555
It is nat his entente, trust me weel.
Axe him thy-self, if thou nat trowest me,
Or elles stint a while, and thou shalt
see.'

This carter thakketh his hors upon the
croupe,
And they bigonne drawn and to-stoupe;
'Heyt, now!' quod he, 'ther Iesu Crist
yow blesse, 1561
And al his handwerk, bothe more and
lesse!
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard
boy!

I pray god save thee and sēynt Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!'
'Lo! brother,' quod the feend, 'what
tolde I thee? 1566
Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,
The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte
another.

Lat us go forth abouten our viage;
Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage.'
Whan that they comen som-what out
of tounes, 1571
This Somnour to his brother gan to
roune,
'Brother,' quod he, 'heer woneth an old
rebekke,

That hadde almost as lief to lese hir
nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hir good. 1575
I wol han twelf pens, though that she be
wood,
Or I wol sompne hir un-to our offyce;
And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no
vyce.
But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,
Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of
me.' 1580

This Somnour clappeth at the widwes
gate.
'Com out,' quod he, 'thou olde viritrate!
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with
thee!'

'Who clappeth?' seyde this widwe,
'*benedicite!*'
God save you, sire, what is your swete
wille?' 1585
'I have,' quod he, 'of somonce here a
bille;
Up deyne of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee
Tenswere to the court of certeyn thinges.'
'Now, lord,' quod she, 'Crist Iesu, king
of kinges, 1590
So wisely helpe me, as I ne may.
I have been syk, and that ful many a day.
I may nat go so fer,' quod she, 'ne ryde,
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.
May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour, 1595
And answer there, by my procourtour,
To swich thing as men wol opposen me?'
'Yis,' quod this Somnour, 'pay anon,
lat se,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquyte.
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte; 1600
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.
Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;
Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.'
'Twelf pens,' quod she, 'now lady
Seinte Marie
So wisely help me out of care and sinne,
This wyde world thogh that I sholde
winne, 1606
Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn
hold.
Ye knowen wel that I am povre and old;
Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'the foule feend
me fecche 1610
If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt!'
'Alas,' quod she, 'god woot, I have no
gilt.'
'Pay me,' quod he, 'or by the swete
seinte Anne,
As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, which that thou owest me of
old, 1615
Whan that thou madest thyn housbond
cokewold,
I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.'
'Thou lixt,' quod she, 'by my sava-
cion!
Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,
Somoned un-to your court in al my lyf;
Ne never I nas but of my body trewe! 1621
Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe

Yeve I thy body and my panne also!'
And whan the devel herde hir cursen so
Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this man-
ere, 1625
'Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,
Is this your wil in earnest, that ye seye?'
'The devel,' quod she, 'so fecche him
er he deye,
And panne and al, but he wol him re-
pente!'
'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn en-
tente,' 1630
Quod this Somnour, 'for to repente me,
For any thing that I have had of thee;
I wolde I hadde thy smok and every
clooth!'
'Now, brother,' quod the devel, 'be
nat wrooth;
Thy body and this panne ben myne by
right. 1635
Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our pri-
vetee
More than a maister of divinitee: '
And with that word this foule feend him
hente; 1639
Body and soule, he with the devel wente
Wher-as that somnours han hir heri-
tage.
And god, that maked after his image
Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and
some;
And leve this Somnour good man to
bicome!
Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod
this Frere, 1645
Hadde I leyser for this Somnour here,
After the text of Crist [and] Poul and
Iohn,
And of our othere doctours many oon,
Swiche peynes, that your hertes mighte
agrye,
Al-be-it so, no tonge may devyse, 1650
Thogh that I mighte a thousand winter
telle,
The peyne of thilke cursed hous of
helle.
But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
Waketh, and preyeth Iesu for his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herketh this word, beth war as in this
cas; 1656
The leoun sit in his await alway

To see the innocent, if that he may.
 Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde
 The feend, that yow wolde make thral
 and bonde. 1660
 He may nat tempten yow over your
 might;

For Crist wol be your champion and
 knight.
 And prayeth that thise Somnours hem
 repente
 Of hir misdedes, er that the feend hem
 hente. 1664

Here endeth the Freres tale.

THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE.

The prologe of the Somnours Tale.

THIS Somnour in his stiropes hye stood;
 Up-on this Frere his herte was so wood,
 That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'but o thing I
 desyre;

I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,
 Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye, 1670
 As suffereth me I may my tale telle!

This Frere bosteth that he knoweth
 helle,

And god it woot, that it is litel wonder;
 Freres and feendes been but lyte a-sonder.
 For pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd
 telle, 1675

How that a frere ravished was to helle
 In spirit ones by a visioun;
 And as an angel ladde him up and down,
 To shewen him the peynes that ther
 were,

In al the place saugh he nat a frere; 1680
 Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.

Un-to this angel spak the frere tho:
 "Now, sir," quod he, "han freres
 swich a grace

That noon of hem shal come to this
 place?"

"Yis," quod this angel, "many a mil-
 lioun!" 1685

And un-to Sathanas he ladde him down.

"And now hath Sathanas," seith he, "a
 tayl

Brodder than of a carrik is the sayl.
 Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas!" quod
 he,

"Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the frere
 see 1690

Wher is the nest of freres in this place!"
 And, er that half a furlong-wey of
 space,

Right so as bees out swarmen from an
 hyve,

Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve
 Twenty thousand freres in a route, 1695
 And thurgh-out helle swarmeden aboute;
 And comen agayn, as faste as they may
 gon,

And in his ers they crepten everichon.
 He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful
 stille.

This frere, whan he loked hadde his
 fille 1700

Upon the torments of this sory place,
 His spirit god restored of his grace
 Un-to his body agayn, and he awook;

But natheles, for fere yet he quook,
 So was the develes ers ay in his minde,
 That is his heritage of verray kinde. 1706
 God save yow alle, save this cursed
 Frere;

My prologe wol I ende in this manere.'

Here endeth the Prologe of the Somnours Tale.

THE SOMNOURS TALE.

Here biginneth the Somonour his Tale.

LORDINGES, ther is in Yorkshire, as I
gesse, 1709

A mersshy contree called Holdernesse,
In which ther wente a limitour aboute,
To preche, and eek to begge, it is no
doute.

And so bifel, that on a day this frere
Had preched at a chirche in his manere,
And specially, aboven every thing, 1715
Excited he the peple in his preching,

To trentals, and to yeve, for goddes sake,
Wher-with men mighten holy houses
make,

Ther as divyne service is honoured,
Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured, 1720
Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yive,
As to possessioners, that mowen live,
Thanked be god, in wele and habun-
daunce.

'Trentals,' seyde he, 'deliveren fro pen-
aunce 1724

Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,
Ye, whan that they been hastily y-songe;
Nat for to holde a preest Ioly and gay,
He singeth nat but o masse in a day;
Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the
soules;

Ful hard it is with fleshhook or with
oules 1730

To been y-clawed, or to brenne or bake;
Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake.'
And whan this frere had seyde al his en-
tente,

With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he
wente.

Whan folk in chirche had yeve him
what hem leste, 1735

He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he
reste,

With scrippe and tipped staf, y-tukked
hye;

In every hous he gan to poure and pryde,
And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles
corn.

His felawe hadde a staf tipped with
horn, 1740

A peyre of tables al of yvory,
And a poyntel polished fetisly,
And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,
Of alle folk that yaf him any good
Ascaunces that he wolde for hem
preye. 1745

'Yeve us a bussel whete, malt, or reye,
A goddes kechil, or a trip of chese,
Or elles what yow list, we may nat
chese;

A goddes halfpeny or a masse-peny,
Or yeve us of your brawn, if ye have
eny; 1750

A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,
Our suster dere, lo! here I write your
name;

Bacon or beef, or swich thing as ye finde.
A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihinde,
That was hir hostes man, and bar a
sak, 1755

And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his
bak.

And whan that he was out at dore anon,
He planed away the names everichon
That he biforn had writen in his tables;
He served hem with nyfles and with
fables. 1760

'Nay, ther thou lixt, thou Somnour,'
quod the Frere.

'Pees,' quod our Host, 'for Cristes
moder dere;

Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al.'
So thryve I, quod this Somnour, so I
shall.—

So longe he wente hous by hous, til
he 1765

Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be
Refreshed more than in an hundred
placis.

Sik lay the gode man, whos that the
place is;

Bedrede up-on a couche lowe he lay.
'*Deus hic*,' quod he, 'O Thomas, freend,
good day,' 1770

Seyde this frere curteisly and softe.
'Thomas,' quod he, 'god yelde yow! ful
ofte

Have I up-on this bench faren ful weel.

Here have I eten many a mery meel';
And fro the bench he droof away the
cat, 1775

And leyde adoun his potente and his
hat,

And eek his scrippe, and sette him softe
adoun.

His felawe was go walked in-to toun,
Forth with his knave, into that hostelrye
Wher-as he shoop him thilke night to
lye. 1780

'O dere maister,' quod this syke man,
'How han he fare sith that March bigan?
I saugh yow noght this fourtenight or
more.'

'God woot,' quod he, 'laboured have I
ful sore;

And specially, for thy savacioun 1785
Have I seyde many a precious orisoun

And for our othere frendes, god hem
blesse!

I have to-day been at your chirche at
messe,

And seyde a sermon after my simple wit,
Nat al after the text of holy writ; 1790

For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,
And therefore wol I teche yow al the
glose.

Glosinge is a glorious thing, certeyn,
For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.

Ther have I taught hem to be charita-
ble, 1795

And spende hir good ther it is resonable,
And ther I saugh our dame; a! wher is
she?'

'Yond in the yerd I trowe that she be,'
Seyde this man, 'and she wol come anon.'

'Ey, maister! wel-come be ye, by seint
Iohn!' 1800

Seyde this wyf, 'how fare ye hertely?'
The frere aryseth up ful curteisly,

And hir embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiste hir swete, and chirketh as a
sparwe

With his lippes: 'dame,' quod he, 'right
weel, 1805

As he that is your servant every deel.
Thanked be god, that yow yaf soule and
lyf,

Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf
In al the chirche, god so save me!'

'Ye, god amende defautes, sir,' quod
she, 1810

'Algates wel-come be ye, by my fey!'

'Graunt mercy dame, this have I founde
alwey.

But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,
I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow
greve,

I wol with Thomas speke a litel throwe.
These curats been ful necligent and
slove 1816

To grope tendrely a conscience.
In shrift, in preching is my diligence,
And studie in Petres wordes, and in
Poules.

I walke, and fische Cristen mennes
soules, 1820

To yelden Iesu Crist his propre rente;
To sprede his word is set al myn en-
tente.'

'Now, by your leve, o dere sir,' quod
she,

'Chydeh him weel, for seinte Trinitee.
He is as angry as a pissemyre, 1825

Though that he have al that he can
desyre.

Though I him wrye a-night and make
him warm,

And on hym leye my leg outhur myn
arm,

He groneth lyk our boor, lyth in our sty.
Other desport right noon of him have I;

I may nat plese him in no maner
cas.' 1831

'O Thomas! *Ie vous dy*, Thomas!
Thomas!

This maketh the feend, this moste ben
amended.

Ire is a thing that hye god defended
And ther-of wol I speke a word or
two.' 1835

'Now maister,' quod the wyf, 'er that
I go,

What wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-
aboute.'

'Now dame,' quod he, '*Ie vous dy*
sanz doute,

Have I nat of a capon but the livere
And of your softe breed nat but a
shivere, 1840

And after that a rosted pigges heed,
(But that I nolde no beest for me were
deed),

Thanne hadde I with yow hoonly suffis-
aunce.

I am a man of litel sustenaunce. 1844
 My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible.
 The body is ay so redy and penyble
 To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.
 I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed,
 Though I so frendly yow my conseil
 shewe;
 By god, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe.'
 'Now, sir,' quod she, 'but o word er
 I go; 1851
 My child is deed with-inne this wykes
 two,
 Sone after that ye wente out of this
 toun.'
 'His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,'
 Seith this frere, 'at hoom in our dor-
 tour. 1855
 I dar wel seyn that, er that half an hour
 After his deeth, I saugh him born to
 blisse
 In myn avisioun, so god me wisse!
 So dide our sexteyn and our fermerer,
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer;
 They may now, god be thanked of his
 lone, 1861
 Maken hir Iubilee and walke allone.
 And up I roos, and al our covent eke,
 With many a tere triking on my cheke,
 Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles;
Te deum was our song and no-thing
 elles, 1866
 Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
 Thankinge him of his revelacioun.
 For sir and dame, trusteth me right weel,
 Our orisons been more effectueel, 1870
 And more we seen of Cristes secree
 thinges
 Than burel folk, al-though they weren
 kinges.
 We live in povert and in abstinence,
 And burel folk in richesse and despence
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul
 delyt. 1875
 We han this worldes lust al in despyt.
 Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,
 And diverse guerdon hadden they ther-
 by.
 Who-so wol preye, he moot faste and be
 clene,
 And fatte his soule and make his body
 lene. 1880
 We fare as seith thapostle; cloth and
 fode

Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.
 The clenness and the fastinge of us
 freres
 Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres.
 Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty
 night 1885
 Fasted, er that the heighe god of might
 Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay.
 With empty wombe, fastinge many a
 day,
 Receyved he the lawe that was writen
 With goddess finger; and Elie, wel ye
 witen, 1890
 In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche
 With hye god, that is our lyves leche,
 He fasted longe and was in contem-
 plaunce.
 Aaron, that hadde the temple in gov-
 ernaunce, 1894
 And eek the othere preestes everichon,
 In-to the temple whan they sholde gon
 To preye for the peple, and do servyse,
 They nolden drinken, in no maner wyse,
 No drinke, which that mighte hem
 dronke make,
 But there in abstinence preye and
 wake 1900
 Lest that they deyden; tak heed what I
 seye.
 But they be sobre that for the peple
 preye,
 War that I seye, — namore! for it suffys-
 eth.
 Our lord Iesu, as holy writ devyseth,
 Yaf us ensample of fastinge and prey-
 eres. 1905
 Therfor we mendinants, we sely freres,
 Been wedded to poverte and continence,
 To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,
 To persecucion for rightwisnesse,
 To wepinge, misericorde, and clen-
 nesse. 1910
 And therfor may ye see that our prey-
 eres —
 I speke of us, we mendinants, we
 freres —
 Ben to the hye god more acceptable
 Than youres, with your festes at the
 table.
 Fro Parady, first, if I shal nat lye, 1915
 Was man out chaced for his glotonye;
 And chaast was man in Parady, cer-
 teyn.

But herkne now, Thomas, what I shall
seyn.
I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shall finde it in a maner glose, 1920
That specially our swete lord Iesus
Spak this by freres, whan he seyde thus:
"Blessed be they that povre in spirit
been."
And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,
Wher it be lyker our professioun, 1925
Or hirs that swimmen in possessioun.
Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye!
And for hir lewednesse I hem diffye.
Me thinketh they ben lyk Iovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walkinge as a
swan; 1930
Al vinolent as botel in the spence.
Hir preyer is of ful gret reverence;
Whan they for soules seye the psalm of
Davit,
Lo, "buf!" they seye "*cor meum eruc-*
tavit!"
Who folweth Cristes gospel and his
fore, 1935
But we that humble been and chast and
pore,
Werkers of goddes word, not auditours?
Therefore, right as an hauk up, at a sours,
Up springeth in-to their, right so prayeres
Of charitable and chaste bisy freres 1940
Maken hir sours to goddes eres two.
Thomas! Thomas! so mote I ryde or
go,
And by that lord that clepid is seint
Yve,
Nere thou our brother, sholdestou nat
thryve!
In our chapitre praye we day and
night 1945
To Crist, that he thee sende hele and
might,
Thy body for to welden hastily.'
'God woot,' quod he, 'no-thing ther-of
fele I;
As help me Crist, as I, in fewe yeres,
Han spended, up-on dyvers maner
freres, 1950
Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the
bet.
Certeyn, my good have I almost biscet.
Farwel, my good! for it is al ago!'
The frere answerde, 'O Thomas,
dostow so?

What nedeth yow diverse freres
seche? 1955
What nedeth him that hath a parfit
leche
To sechen othere leches in the toun?
Your inconstance is your confusioun.
Holde ye than me, or elles our covent,
To praye for yow ben insufficient? 1960
Thomas, that Iape nis nat worth a myte;
Your maladye is for we han to lyte.
"A! yif that covent half a quarter
otes!"
"A! yif that covent four and twenty
grotes!"
"A! yif that frere a peny, and lat him
go!" 1965
Nay, nay, Thomas! it may no-thing be
so.
What is a ferthing worth parted in
twelve?
Lo, ech thing that is oned in him-selve
Is more strong than whan it is to-scat-
tered.
Thomas, of me thou shalt nat been y-
flatered; 1970
Thou woldest han our labour al for
nought.
The hye god, that al this world hath
wrought,
Seith that the werkman worthy is his
hyre.
Thomas! nought of your tresor I desyre
As for my-self, but that al our covent
To preye for yow is ay so diligent, 1976
And for to builden Cristes owene chirche.
Thomas! if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
Of buildinge up of chirches may ye
finde
If it be good, in Thomas lyf of
Inde. 1980
Ye lye heer, ful of anger and of yre,
With which the devel set your herte
a-fyre,
And chyden heer this sely innocent,
Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.
And therfor, Thomas, trowe me if thee
leste, 1985
Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy
beste;
And ber this word away now, by thy
feith,
Touchinge this thing, lo what the wyse
seith:

"With-in thyn hous ne be thou no
leoun ;

To thy subgits do noon oppres-
sion ; 1990

Ne make thyne aqueyntances nat to
flee."

And Thomas, yet eft-sones I charge thee,
Be war from hir that in thy bosom
slepeth ;

War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth
Under the gras, and stingeth sub-
tilly. 1995

Be war, my sone, and herkne paciently,
That twenty thousand men han lost hir
lyves,

For stryving with hir lemmans and hir
wyves.

Now sith ye han so holy and meke a
wyf,

What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken
stryf ? 2000

Ther nis, y-wis, no serpent so cruel,
Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so
fel,

As woman is, whan she hath caught an
ire ;

Vengeance is thanne al that they desyre.
Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of
sevene, 2005

Abhominable vn-to the god of hevене ;
And to him-self it is destruccion.

This every lewed viker or person
Can seye, how Ire engendreth homicyde.

Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde. 2010

I coude of Ire seye so muche sorwe,
My tale sholde laste til to-morwe.

And therfor preye I god bothe day and
night,

An irous man, god sende him litel might !
It is greet harm and, certes, gret pitee,
To sette an irous man in heigh de-
gree. 2016

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
As seith Senek, that, duringe his estaat,

Up-on a day out riden knyghtes two,
And as fortune wolde that it were so, 2020

That oon of hem cam hoom, that other
noght.

Anon the knight bifore the Iuge is broght,
That seyde thus, 'thou hast thy felawe
slayn,

For which I deme thee to the deeth, cer-
tayne.'

And to another knight comanded he, 2025
'Go lede him to the deeth, I charge thee.'

And happed, as they wente by the weye
Toward the place ther he sholde deye,

The knight cam, which men wenden had
be deed.

Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste
reed, 2030

To lede hem bothe to the Iuge agayn.
They seiden, 'lord, the knight ne hath
nat slayn

His felawe; here he standeth hool alyve.'
'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I
thryve!

That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and
three!' 2035

And to the firste knight right thus spak
he,

'I dampned thee, thou most algate be
deed.

And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed,
For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.'

And to the thridde knight right thus he
seyth, 2040

'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded
thee.'

And thus he dide don sleen hem alle
three.

Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.

And so bifel, a lord of his meynee 2045
That lovede vertuuous moralitee,

Seyle on a day bitwix hem two right
thus:

'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And dronkenesse is eek a foul record

Of any man, and namely in a lord. 2050
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere

Awaiting on a lord, and he noot where.
For goddes love, drink more attemprely;

Wyn waketh man to lesen wrecchedly
His minde, and eek his limes everichon.'

'The revers shaltou se,' quod he,
'anon; 2056

And preve it, by thyn owene experience,
That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich

offence.

Ther is no wyn hireveth me my might
Of hand ne foot, ne of myn eyen sight'—

And, for despyt, he drank ful muchel
more 2061

An hundred part than he had doon bifore;
And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche

Leet this knightes sone bifore him fecche,
Comandinge him he sholde bifore him
stonde. 2065

And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde,
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he slow the child right
there:

'Now whether have I a siker hand or
noon?'

Quod he, 'is al my might and minde
agoon? 2070

Hath wyn bired me myn eyen sight?'
What sholde I telle thanswere of the
knight?

His sone was slayn, ther is na-more to
seye.

Beth war therfor with lordes how ye
pleye.

Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal, if I can, 2075
But if it be un-to a povre man.

To a povre man men sholde hise vyces
telle,

But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to
helle.

Lo irous Cirus, thilke Percien,
How he destroyed the river of Gysen, 2080
For that an hors of his was dreynt ther-
inne,

Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne.
He made that the river was so smal,
That women mighte wade it over al.

Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can?
"Ne be no felawe to an irous man, 2086
Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,
Lest thee repente;" ther is na-more to
seye.

Now Thomas, leve brother, lef thyn ire;
Thou shalt me finde as Iust as is a
squire. 2090

Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn
herte;

Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte;
But shewe to me al thy confessioun.'

'Nay,' quod the syke man, 'by Seint
Simoun!

I have be shriven this day at my curat;
I have him told al hoolly myn estat; 2096
Nedeth na-more to speke of it,' seith he,
'But if me list of myn humilitee.'

'Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make
our cloistre,'

Quod he, 'for many a muscle and many
an oistre, 2100

Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse,
Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to
reyse.

And yet, god woot, unnethe the funde-
ment

Parfourned is, ne of our pavement 2104
Nis nat a tyle yet with-inne our wones;

By god, we owen fourty pound for stones!
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed
helle!

For elles moste we are bokes selle.
And if ye lakke our predicacioun,

Than gooth the world al to destruccioun.
For who-so wolde us fro this world
bireve, 2111

So god me save, Thomas, by your leve,
He wolde bireve out of this world the
sonne.

For who can teche and werchen as we
conne?

And that is nat of litel tyme,' quod he;
'But sith that Elie was, or Elisee, 2116

Han freres been, that finde I of record,
In charitee, y-thanked be our lord.

Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee!'
And down anon he sette him on his
knee. 2120

This syke man wex wel ny wood for
ire;

He wolde that the frere had been on-fire
With his false dissimulacioun.

'Swich thing as is in my possessioun,'
Quod he, 'that may I yeven, and non
other. 2125

Ye sey me thus, how that I am your
brother?'

'Ye, certes,' quod the frere, 'trusteth
weel;

I took our dame our lettre with our seel.'
'Now wel,' quod he, 'and som-what
shal I yive

Un-to your holy covent whyl I live, 2130
And in thyn hand thou shalt it have
anoon;

On this condicioun, and other noon,
That thou departe it so, my dere brother,
That every frere have also muche as other.

This shaltou swere on thy professioun,
With-ouen fraude or cavillacioun.' 2136

'I swere it,' quod this frere, 'upon my
feith!'

And ther-with-al his hand in his he
leith:

'Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak.'

'Now thanne, put thyn hand down by my bak,' 2140

Seyde this man, 'and grope wel bihinde; Bynethe my buttoke ther shaltow finde A thing that I have hid in privetee.'

'A!' thoghte this frere, 'this shal go with me!'

And down his hand he launcheth to the clifte, 2145

In hope for to finde ther a yifte.

And whan this syke man felte this frere Aboute his tuwel grope there and here, Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart. Ther nis no capul, drawinge in a cart, 2150 That mighte have lete a fart of swich a soun.

'The frere up stirte as doth a wood leoun:

'A! false cherl,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,

This hastow for despyt doon, for the nones!

Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may!'

His meyne, whiche that herden this affray, 2156

Cam lepinge in, and chaced out the frere;

And forth he gooth, with a ful angry chere,

And fette his felawe, ther-as lay his stoor. He looked as it were a wilde boor; 2160 He grinte with his teeth, so was he wrooth.

A sturdy pas down to the court he gooth, Wher-as ther woned a man of greet honour,

To whom that he was alwey confessour; This worthy man was lord of that village.

This frere cam, as he were in a rage, 2166 Wher-as this lord sat eting at his bord.

Unnethes mighte the frere speke a word, Til atte laste he seyde: 'god yow see!'

This lord gan loke, and seide, '*benedicite!*' 2170

What, frere Iohn, what maner world is this?

I see wel that som thing ther is amis.

Ye loken as the wode were ful of thevis, Sit down anon, and tel me what your greef is,

And it shal be amended, if I may.' 2175

'I have,' quod he, 'had a despyt this day,

God yelde yow! adoun in your village, That in this world is noon so povre a page,

That he nolde have abhominacioun 2179 Of that I have received in your toun.

And yet ne greveth me no-thing so sore, As that this olde cherl, with lokkes here, Blasphemed hath our holy covent eke.'

'Now, maister,' quod this lord, 'I yow biseke.'

'No maister, sire,' quod he, 'but servitour, 2185

Thogh I have had in scole swich honour. God lyketh nat that "Raby" men us calle,

Neither in market ne in your large halle.'

'No fors,' quod he, 'but tel me al your grief.'

'Sire,' quod this frere, 'an odious meschief 2190

This day bitid is to myn ordre and me, And so *per consequens* to ech degree Of holy chirche, god amende it sone!'

'Sir,' quod the lord, 'ye woot what is to done.

Distempere yow noght, ye be my confessour; 2195

Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour.

For goddes love your pacience ye holde; Tel me your grief:' and he anon him tolde,

As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.

The lady of the hous ay stille sat, 2200 Til she had herd al what the frere seyde: 'Ey, goddes moder,' quod she, 'blisful mayde!

Is ther oght elles? telle me feithfully.'

'Madame,' quod he, 'how thinketh yow her-by?'

'How that me thinketh?' quod she; 'so god me speede, 2205

I seye, a cherl hath doon a cherles dede. What shold I seye? god lat him never thee!

His syke heed is ful of vanitee,

I hold him in a maner frenesy.

'Madame,' quod he, 'by god I shal nat lye; 2210

But I on other weyes may be wreke, I shal diffame him over-al ther I speke,

This false blasphemour, that charged
me
To parte that wol nat departed be, 2214
To every man y-liche, with meschaunce!
The lord sat stille as he were in a
traunce,
And in his herte he rolled up and down,
'How hadde this cherl imaginacioun
To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?
Never erst er now herde I of swich
matere; 2220
I trowe the devel putte it in his minde.
In ars-metryke shal ther no man finde,
Biforn this day, of swich a questioun.
Who sholde make a demonstracioun,
That every man sholde have y-liche his
part 2225
As of the soun or savour of a fart?
O nyce proude cherl, I shrewe his face!
'Lo, sires,' quod the lord, with harde
grace,
'Who ever herde of swich a thing er
now?
To every man y-lyke? tel me how? 2230
It is an impossible, it may nat be!
Ey, nyce cherl, god lete him never thee!
The rumblinge of a fart, and every soun,
Nis but of eir reverberacioun, 2234
And ever it wasteth lyte and lyte awaye.
Ther is no man can demen, by my fey,
If that it were departed equally.
What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly
Un-to my confessour to-day he spak!
I holde him certeyn a demoniak! 2240
Now ete your mete, and lat the cherl go
pleye,
Lat him go hongre himself, a devel weye!
Now stood the lordes squyer at the
bord,
That carf his mete, and herde, word by
word,
Of alle thinges of which I have yow
sayd. 2245
'My lord,' quod he, 'be ye nat yvel
apayd;
I coude telle, for a goune-clooth,
To yow, sir frere, so ye be nat wrooth,
How that this fart sholde even deled be
Among your covent, if it lyked me.' 2250
'Tel,' quod the lord, 'and thou shalt
have anon
A goune-cloth, by god and by Seint
Iohn!'

'My lord,' quod he, 'whan that the
weder is fair,
With-outen wind or perturbinge of air,
Lat bringe a cartwheel here in-to this
halle, 2255
But loke that it have his spokes alle.
Twelf spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.
And bring me than twelf freres, woot
ye why?
For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.
The confessour heer, for his worthinesse,
Shal parfourn up the nombre of his
covent. 2261
Than shal they knele down, by oon
assent,
And to every spokes ende, in this
manere,
Ful sadly leye his nose shal a frere.
Your noble confessour, ther god him
save, 2265
Shal holde his nose upright, under the
nave.
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and
toght
As any labour, hider been y-brought;
And sette him on the wheel right of
this cart,
Upon the nave, and make him lete a
fart. 2270
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,
By preve which that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eek the stink, un-to the spokes
ende;
Save that this worthy man, your con-
fessour, 2275
By-cause he is a man of greet honour,
Shal have the firste fruit, as reson is;
The noble usage of freres yet is this,
The worthy men of him shul first be
served; 2279
And certainly, he hath it weel deserved.
He hath to-day taught us so muchel
good
With preching in the pulpit ther he
stood,
That I may vouche-sauf, I sey for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde al his covent hardily; 2285
He bereth him so faire and holily.'
The lord, the lady, and ech man, save
the frere,
Seyde that Iankin spak, in this matere,

As wel as Euclide or [as] Ptholomee.
 Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, sub-
 tiltee 2290
 And heigh wit made him speken as he
 spak;

He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.
 And Iankin hath y-wonne a newe
 gounne.—
 My tale is doon; we been almost at
 toune. 2294

Here endeth the Somnours Tale.

GROUP E.

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folweth the Prologe of the Clerkes
 Tale of Oxenford.*

'SIR clerk of Oxenford,' our hoste sayde,
 'Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a
 mayde,
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;
 This day ne herde I of your tonge a word.
 I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme, 5
 But Salomon seith, "every thing hath
 tyme."

For goddes sake, as beth of better chere,
 It is no tyme for to studien here.

Telle us som mery tale, by your fey;
 For what man that is entred in a pley, 10
 He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
 But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,
 To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,
 Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.

Telle us som mery thing of aventures; — 15

Your termes, your colours, and your figures,
 Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges
 wryte.

Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, I yow
 preye,

That we may understonde what ye seye.' 20

This worthy clerk benignely answerde,
 'Hoste,' quod he, 'I am under your yerde;
 Ye han of us as now the governaunce,
 And therfor wol I do yow obeisaunce,
 As fer as reson axeth, hardily. 25
 I wol yow telle a tale which that I

Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 As preved by his wordes and his werk.
 He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,
 I prey to god so yeve his soule reste! 30
 Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rethoryke sweete
 Enlumined al Itaille of poetrye,
 As Linian dide of philosophye
 Or lawe, or other art particular; 35
 But death, that wol nat suffre us dwellen
 heer

But as it were a twinkling of an yë,
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we
 dyë.

But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
 That taught me this tale, as I bigan, 40
 I seye that first with heigh style he en-
 dyteth,

Er he the body of his tale wryteth,
 A proheme, in the which discryveth he
 Pemonde, and of Saluces the contree,
 And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye, 45
 That been the boundes of West Lum-
 bardye,

And of Mount Vesulus in special,
 Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,
 Taketh his firste springing and his sours,
 That estward ay encesseth in his cours, 50
 To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venyse:
 The which a long thing were to devyse.
 And trewely, as to my Iugement,
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
 Save that he wol conveyen his matere: 55
 But this his tale, which that ye may
 here.'

THE CLERKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

THER is, at the west syde of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst
biholde, 60
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree sighte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
As were his worthy elders him bifore; 65
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more.
Thus in delyt he liveth, and bath don yore,
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune. 70

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardye,
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of
age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye;
Discreet y-nogh his contree for to gye, 75
Save in somme thinges that he was to
blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considereth
nogh
In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,
But on his lust present was al his thoght, 80
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of
alle,
Wedde no wyf, for nogh that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so sore, 85
That flokmele on a day they to him wente,
And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
That he sholde telle him what his peple
mente,
Or elles coude he shewe wel swich mat-
ere, 90
He to the markis seyde as ye shul here.

'O noble markis, your humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee
That we to yow mowe telle our hevi-
nesse; 95
Accepteth, lord, now for your gentillesse,
That we with pitous herte un-to yow
pleyne,
And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne.

Al have I nogh to done in this matere
More than another man hath in this
place, 100
Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
I dar the better aske of yow a space
Of audience, to shewen our requeste,
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow
leste. 105

For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow
And al your werk and ever han doon,
that we
Ne coude nat us self devyssen how
We mighte liven in more felicitee,
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be, 110
That for to been a wedded man yow
leste,
Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes
reste.

Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok
Of soveraynetee, nogh of servyse,
Which that men clepeth spousaille or
wedlok; 115
And thenketh, lord, among your thoghtes
wyse,
How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse;
For though we slepe or wake, or rome,
or ryde,
Ay fleeth the tyme, it nil no man abyde.

And though your grene youthe floure as
yit, 120
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,
And deeth manaceth every age, and smit
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon:
And al so certain as we knowe echoon
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle

Been of that day whan deeth shal on us
falle. 126

Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,
That never yet refuseden your heste,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,
Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte
leste, 130

Born of the gentilleste and of the meste
Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme
Honour to god and yow, as we can deme.

Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,
And tak a wyf, for hye goddes sake; 135
For if it so bifelle, as god forbede,
That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde
slake,
And that a straunge successour sholde
take

Your heritage, o! wo were us alyve!
Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve.' 140

Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis herte han pitee.
'Ye wol,' quod he, 'myn owene peple
dere,
To that I never erst thoghte streyne me.
I me reioysed of my libertee, 145
That selde tyme is founde in mariage;
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

But natheles I see your trewe entente,
And truste upon your wit, and have don
ay;
Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente 150
To wedde me, as sone as ever I may.
But ther-as ye han profred me to-day
To chese me a wyf, I yow relese
That choys, and prey yow of that profre
cesse.

For god it woot, that children ofte been
Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore; 156
Bountee comth al of god, nat of the
streen
Of which they been engendred and
y-bore;
I truste in goddes bountee, and therefore
My mariage and myn estaat and reste 160
I him bitake; he may don as him leste.

Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
That charge up-on my bak I wol endure;

But I yow preye, and charge up-on your
lyf,

That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshiþe hir, whyl that hir lyf may
dure, 166

In word and werk, bothe here and every-
where,

As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that
ye

Agayn my choys shul neither grucche'ne
stryve; 170

For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh na-more of this
matere.' 175

With hertly wil they sworn, and assenten
To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay;
Biseking him of grace, er that they
wenten,

That he wolde graunten hem a certain
day

Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he
may; 180

For yet alwey the peple som-what dredde
Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunten hem a day, swich as him
leste,

On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,
And seyde, he dide al this at hir re-
queste; 185

And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
Knelinge up-on her knees ful reverently
Him thanken alle, and thus they han an
ende

Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they
wende.

And heer-up-on he to his officeres 190
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,
And to his privee knightes and squyeres
Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye;
And they to his comandement obeye,
And ech of hem doth al his diligence 195
To doon un-to the feste reverence.

Explicit prima pars.

Incipit secunda pars.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honourable
 Ther-as this markis shoop his mariage,
 Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,
 In which that povre folk of that village
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage, 201
 And of hir labour took hir sustenance
 After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a
 man

Which that was holden povrest of hem
 alle; 205

But hye god som tyme senden can

His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle:

Ianacula men of that throp him calle.

A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to
 sighte, 209

And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Than was she oon the faireste under
 sonne;

For povreliche y-fostred up was she,

No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte
 y-ronne; 214

Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne
 She drank, and for she wolde vertu plesse,
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee

Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage;

And in greet reverence and charitee 221

Hir olde povre fader fostred she;

A fewe sheep spinning on feeld she kepte,

She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde
 bringe 225

Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,

The whiche she shredde and seeth for
 hir livinge,

And made hir bed ful harde and no-thing
 softe;

And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte

With everich obeisaunce and diligence

That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature, 232

Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yē

As he on hunting rood paraventure;

And whan it fil that he mighte hir
 espye, 235

He noght with wantoun lokyng of folye

His yē caste on hir, but in sad wyse

Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse,

Commending in his herte hir womman-
 hede,

And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 240

Of so yonge age, as wel in chere as dede.

For thogh the peple have no greet insight

In vertu, he considered ful right

Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde

Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde
 sholde. 245

The day of wedding cam, but no wight
 can

Telle what womman that it sholde be;

For which merveille wondred many a
 man,

And syden, whan they were in privetee,

'Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee? 250

Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle!

Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle?'

But natheles this markis hath don make

Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,

Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake, 255

And of hir clothing took he the mesure

By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,

And eek of othere ornamentes alle

That un-to swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern of the same day 260

Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;

And al the paleys put was in array,

Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his de-
 gre;

Houses of office stuffed with plentee 264

Ther maystow seen of deynteous vitaille,

That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,

Lordes and ladyes in his companye,

The whiche unto the feste were y-prayed,

And of his retenue the bachelrye, 270

With many a soun of sondry melodye,

Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,

In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,

That for hir shapen was al this array, 275

To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she
may.

For wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke
day

The markis sholde wedde, and, if she
mighte,

She wolde fayn han seyn som of that
sighte. 280

She thoghte, 'I wol with othere maydens
stonde,

That been my felawes, in our dore, and
see

The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth un-to me;
And then I may at leysur hir biholde, 286
If she this wey un-to the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold
goon,

The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;
And she sette down hir water-pot anon

Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxesstalle, 291
And down up-on hir knees she gan to
falle,

And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes
wille.

This thoughtful markis spak un-to this
mayde 295

Ful sobroly, and seyde in this manere,
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde,

And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde, 'lord, he is al redy here.'

And in she gooth with-outen lenger lette,
And to the markis she her fader fette. 301

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde
asyde,

'Ianicula, I neither may ne can 304
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.

If that thou vouche-sauf, what-so bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,

As for my wyf, un-to hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man y-bore; 310
And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn

It lyketh thee, and specially therfore

Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,
If that thou wolt un-to that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?' 315

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking

He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But only thus: 'lord,' quod he, 'my will-

ing
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking 320
I wol no-thing; ye be my lord so dere;
Right as yow lust governeth this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,
'That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion, and wostow why? 325
For I wol axe if it hir wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
I wol nocht speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were
aboute 330

Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,
The peple cam un-to the hous with-

oute,
And wondred hem in how honest manere
And tentily she kepte hir fader dere.

But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte, 335
For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that
place;

She never was to swiche gestes woned, 339
For which she loked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis
sayde

To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel under-
stonde

It lyketh to your fader and to me 345
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so
stonde,

As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.
But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse? 350

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,

As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or
smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, night ne
day ?

And eek whan I sey "ye," ne sey nat
"nay," 355

Neither by word ne frowning contenance;
Swere this, and here I swere our alliance.'

Wondring upon this word, quaking for
drede,

She seyde, 'lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede;
But as ye wol your-self, right so wol I. 361
And heer I swere that never willingly
In werk ne thought I nil yow disobeye,
For to be deed, though me were looth to
deye.'

'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn !' quod
he. 365

And forth he gooth with a ful sobre
chere

Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth
here.

Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,
Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to
seye.' 371

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere
She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right
there;

Of which these ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wher-in she was
clad. 376

But natheles this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al
newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay un-
tressed

Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smale 380
A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,
And sette hir ful of nowches grete and
smale;

Of hir array what sholde I make a tale ?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fair-
nesse,

Whan she translated was in swich rich-
esse. 385

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and than hir
sette

Up-on an hors, snow-whyte and wel
ambling,

And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With Ioyful peple that hir ladde and
mette, 390

Conveyed hir, and thus the day they
spende

In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markissee
God hath swich favour sent hir of his
grace, 395

That it ne semed nat by lyknesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so dere 400
And worshipful, that folk ther she was
bore

And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by
yere,

Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han
swore

That to Ianicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by coniecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For thogh that ever vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hir lovede that loked on hir
face.

Noght only of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,
But eek bisyde in many a regioun, 416
If oon seyde wel, another seyde the
same;

So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as
olde,

Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde. 420

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
Wedded with fortunat honestete,

In goddes pees liveth ful esily
 At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had
 he; 424
 And for he saugh that under low degree
 Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde
 A prudent man, and that is seyn ful
 selde.

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
 Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
 But eek, whan that the cas requyred it,
 The commune profit coude she redresse.
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne heviness
 In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,
 And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and
 ese.

Though that hir housbonde absent were
 anon, 435
 If gentil men, or othere of hir contree
 Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem
 atoon;
 So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,
 And Iugements of so greet equitee,
 That she from heven sent was as men
 wende, 440
 Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
 Was wedded, she a doughter hath y-bore,
 Al had hir lever have born a knave
 child.
 Glad was this markis and the folk ther-
 fore; 445
 For though a mayde child come al bifore,
 She may unto a knave child atteyne
 By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne.

Explicit secunda pars.

Incipit tercia pars.

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,
 Whan that this child had souked but a
 throwe, 450
 This markis in his herte longeth so
 To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to
 knowe,
 That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe
 This merveillous desyr, his wyf tassaye,
 Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for
 taffraye. 455

He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bifore,

And fond hir ever good; what neded it
 Hir for to tempte and alwey more and
 more?

Though som men preise it for a subtil
 wit,

But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit 460
 Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
 And putten her in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wroghte in this
 manere;

He cam alone a-night, ther as she lay,
 With sterne face and with ful trouble
 chere, 465

And seide thus, 'Grisild,' quod he, 'that
 day

That I yow took out of your povre array,
 And putte yow in estat of heigh no-
 blesse,

Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee, 470
 In which that I have put yow, as I
 trowe,

Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be
 That I yow took in povre estat ful lowe
 For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe.
 Tak hede of every word that I yow
 seye, 475

Ther is no wight that hereth it but we
 tweye.

Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam
 here

In-to this hous, it is nat longe ago,
 And though to me that ye be lief and
 dere,

Un-to my gentils ye be no-thing so; 480
 They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and
 wo

For to be subgets and ben in servage
 To thee, that born art of a smal village.

And namely, sith thy doghter was y-bore,
 Thise wordes han they spoken doute-
 lees; 485

But I desyre, as I have doon bifore,
 To live my lyf with hem in reste and
 pees;

I may nat in this caas be recchelees.
 I moot don with thy doghter for the
 beste, 489

Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.

And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to
me;
But natheles with-oute your witing
I wol nat doon, but this wol I, quod he,
'That ye to me assente as in this thing.
Shewe now your pacience in your werk-
ing 495
That ye me highte and swore in your
village
That day that maked was our mariage.'

Whan she had herd al this, she noght
ameved
Neither in word, or chere, or counte-
naunce;
For, as it semed, she was nat agreed:
She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your ple-
saunce, 501
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or
spille
Your owene thing; werketh after your
wille.

Ther may no-thing, god so my soule
save, 505
Lyken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;
This wil is in myn herte and ay shal be.
No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this
deface, 510
Ne change my corage to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his chere and his loking
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre
go. 515
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath told al his entente
Un-to a man, and to his wyf him sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden
hadde 520
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel
can
Don execucioun on thinges badde.
The lord knew wel that he him loved
and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes
wille

In-to the chambre he stalked him ful
stille. 525

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it
me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am con-
streyned;
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been
y-feyned;
They mowe wel been biwailed or com-
pleyned, 530
But men mot nede un-to her lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is na-more to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take' —
And spak na-more, but out the child he
hente
Despitously, and gan a chere make 535
As though he wolde han slayn it er he
wente.
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and
stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his
wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this
man, 540
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so
She wende he wolde han slawen it right
tho. 544
But natheles she neither weep ne syked
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man,
That she moste kisse hir child er that it
deyde; 550
And in her barm this litel child she
leyde
With ful sad face, and gan the child to
kisse
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,
'Far weel, my child; I shall thee never
see; 555
But, sith I thee have marked with the
croys,

Of thilke fader blessed mote thou be,
That for us deyde up-on a croys of tree.
Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,
For this night shaltow dyen for my
sake. 560

I trowe that to a norice in this cas
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed
'allas!'

But natheles so sad stedfast was she,
That she endured all adversitee, 565
And to the sergeant meekly she sayde,
'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my
lordes heste,
But o thing wol I preye yow of your
grace,

That, but my lord forbad yow, atte
leste 570

Burieth this litel body in som place
That bestes ne no bridles it to-race.'
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
But took the child and wente upon his
weye.

This sergeant cam un-to his lord ageyn,
And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere 576
He tolde him point for point, in short
and playn,

And him presenteth with his doghter
dere.

Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his
manere;

But natheles his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon, when they wol han hir
wille; 581

And had his sergeant that he prively
Sholde this child ful softe winde and
wrappe

With alle circumstancs tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But, up-on peyne his heed of for to
swappe, 586

That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he
wente;

But at Boloigne to his suster dere,
That thilke tyme of Panik was count-
esse, 590

He sholde it take, and shewe hir this
matere,
Bisekinge hir to don hir bisnesse
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse;
And whos child that it was he had hir
hyde

From every wight, for oght that may
bityde. 595

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this
thing;

But to this markis now retourne we;
For now goth he ful faste imagining
If by his wyves chere he mighte see,
Or by hir word aperceyve that she 600
Were chaunged; but he never hir coude
finde

But ever in oon y-lyke sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
And eek in love as she was wont to be,
Was she to him in every maner wyse;
Ne of hir doghter nought a word spak
she. 606

Non accident for noon adversitee
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter
name

Ne neipned she, in earnest nor in game.

*Explicit tercius pars. Sequitur pars
quarta.*

In this estaat ther passed been foure
yeer 610

Er she with childe was; but, as god
wolde,

A knave child she bar by this Walter,
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
Nat only he, but al his contree, merie 615
Was for this child, and god they thanke
and herie.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the
brest

Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another lest 619
To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may.
O needles was she tempted in assay!
But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,
Whan that they finde a pacient creature.

'Wyf,' quod this markis, 'ye han herd
er this,

My peple sikly berth our mariage 625
 And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,
 Now is it worse than ever in al our
 age.

The murmur sleeth myn herte and my
 corage;

For to myne eres comth the voys so
 smerte,

That it wel ny destroyed hath myn
 herte. 630

Now sey they thus, "whan Walter is
 agoon,

Then shal the blood of Ianicle succede
 And been our lord, for other have we
 noon;'

Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of
 drede.

Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken
 hede; 635

For certainly I drede swich sentence,
 Though they nat pleyn speke in myn
 audience.

I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte;
 Wherfor I am disposed outerly,
 As I his suster served by nighte, 640
 Right so thanke I to serve him prively;
 This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly
 Out of your-self for no wo sholde out-
 raye;

Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye.'

'I have,' quod she, 'seyd thus, and ever
 shal, 645

I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,
 But as yow list; nocht greveth me at al,
 Thogh that my doghter and my sone be
 slayn,

At your comandement, this is to sayn.

I have nocht had no part of children
 tweyne 650

But first siknesse, and after wo and
 peyne.

Ye been our lord, doth with your owene
 thing

Right as yow list; axeth no reed at
 me.

For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,
 Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod
 she, 655

'Left I my wil and al my libertee,

And took your clothing; wherfor I
 yow preye,
 Doth your plesaunce, I wol your lust
 obeye.

And certes, if I hadde prescience
 Your wil to knowe er ye your lust me
 tolde, 660

I wolde it doon with-outen necligence;
 But now I woot your lust and what ye
 wolde,

Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I
 holde;

For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow
 ese, 664

Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to ples-

se. Deth may nocht make no comparisoun
 Un-to your love: ' and, whan this markis
 sey

The constance of his wyf, he caste
 adoun

His yēn two, and wondreth that she
 may

In pacience suffre al this array. 670

And forth he gooth with drery conte-
 naunce,

But to his herte it was ful greet ples-
 aunce.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
 That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,
 Or worse, if men worse can devyse, 675
 Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of
 beautee.

And ever in oon so pacient was she,
 That she no chere made of hevinesse,
 But kiste hir sone, and after gan it
 blesse;

Save this; she preyed him that, if he
 mighte, 680

Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,
 His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,
 Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.

But she non answer of him might have.

He wente his wey, as him no-thing ne
 roghte; 685

But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

This markis wondreth ever lenger the
 more

Up-on hir pacience, and if that he

Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,
That parfitly hir children lovede she, 690
He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
And of malice or for cruel corage,
That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next him-self,
certayn,
She loved hir children best in every wyse. 695
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,
If these assayes mighte nat suffyse?
What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse
To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse, 699
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,
That, whan they have a certein purpos take,
They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed 706
To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage;
But never coude he finde variance; 710
She was ay oon in herte and in visage;
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The more trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two 715
Ther nas but o wil; for, as Walter leste,
The same lust was hir plesance also,
And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste
A wyf, as of hir-self, no-thing ne sholde
Wille in effect, but as hir housbond wolde. 721

The sclandre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,

That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a povre womman wedded hadde,
Hath mordred bothe his children prively.
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere 727
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore
Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame 730
Made hem that they him hatede therfore;
To beea a mordrer is an hateful name.
But natheles, for earnest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos nolde stente; 734
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse
Enformed of his wil, sente his message,
Comaunding hem swiche bulles to devyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffyse, 740
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.

I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete
The popes bulles, making mencion
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,
As by the popes dispensacioun; 746
To stinte rancour and dissencioun
Bitwix his peple and him; thus seyde
the bulle,
The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is, 750
Wenden ful wel that it had been right so;
But whan this tydinges cam to Grisildis,
I deme that hir herte was ful wo.
But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,
Disposed was, this humble creature, 755
Thadversitee of fortune al tendure.

Abyding ever his lust and his plesance,
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,
As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce;
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal, 760
This markis writen hath in special

A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,
And secrely he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Panik, which that hadde
tho

Wedded his suster, preyde he specially
To bringen hoom agayn his children
two 766

In honourable estaat al openly.
But o thing he him preyede outerly,
That he to no wight, though men wolde
enquere,

Sholde nat telle, whos children that
they were, 770

But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded
be

Un-to the markis of Saluce anon.
And as this erl was preyed, so dide he;
For at day set he on his wey is goon 774
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde;
Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere;
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was
of age, 780

Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere.
And thus in greet noblesse and with
glad chere,

Toward Saluces shaping hir Iourney,
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

*Explicit quarta pars. Sequitur quinta
pars.*

Among al this, after his wikke usage, 785
This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more
To the uttereste preve of hir corage,
Fully to han experience and lore
If that she were as stedfast as bifore,
He on a day in open audience 790
Ful boistously hath seyde hir this sentence :

‘Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough ple-
saunce

To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,
As for your trouthe and for your obei-
saunce,

Nought for your linage ne for your rich-
esse ; 795

But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse

That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may;
My peple me constreyneth for to take 800
Another wyf, and cryen day by day;
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake;
And trelweliche thus muche I wol yow
seye,

My newe wyf is coming by the weye. 805

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir
place,

And thilke dower that ye broghten me
Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace;
Retourneth to your fadres hous,’ quod he;
‘No man may alwey han prosperitee; 810
With evene herte I rede yow tendure
The strook of fortune or of aventure.’

And she answerde agayn in pacience,
‘My lord,’ quod she, ‘I woot, and wiste
alway

How that bitwixen your magnificence 815
And my poverte no wight can ne may
Maken comparison; it is no nay.

I ne heeld me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady
made — 820

The heighe god take I for my witesse,
And also wisly he my soule glade —

I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may
dure, 825

Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I
preye 830

Foryelde it yow; there is na-more to
seye.

Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwelle un-to my lyves
ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede 835

A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
 And an your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
 God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
 Another man to housbonde or to
 make. 840

And of your newe wyf, god of his grace
 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee :
 For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,
 In which that I was blisful wont to be,
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod
 she, 845
 'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow
 leste.

But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
 It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing
 faire, 850
 The which to me were hard now for to
 finde.

O gode god! how gentil and how kinde
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage
 The day that makel was our mariage!

But sooth is seyde, algate I finde it
 trewe — 855

For in effect it preved is on me —
 Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
 To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be -
 That ever in word or werk I shal re-
 pente 860
 That I yow yaf myn herte in hool en-
 tente.

My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,
 Ye dede me strepe out of my povre wede,
 And richely me cladden, of your grace.
 To yow broghte I noghte elles, out of
 drede, 865
 But feyth and nakednesse and mayden-
 hede.
 And here agayn my clothing I restore,
 And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore.

The remenant of your Jewels redy be
 In-with your chambre, dar I saufully
 sayn; 870
 Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she,
 'I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.

Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn;
 But yet I hope it be nat your entente
 That I smoklees out of your paleys
 wente. 875

Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing,
 That thilke wombe in which your children
 leye
 Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walking,
 Be seyn al bare; wherfor I yow preye,
 Let me nat lyk a worm go by the
 weye. 880
 Remembre yow, myn owene lord so dere,
 I was your wyf, thogh I unworthy were.

Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
 Which that I broghte, and noght agayn
 I bere,
 As voucheth sauful to yeve me, to my
 mede, 885
 But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
 That I therwith may wrye the wombe of
 here
 That was your wyf; and heer take I my
 leve
 Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow
 greve.'

'The smok,' quod he, 'that thou hast on
 thy bak, 890
 Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee.'
 But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
 But wente his wey for rewthe and for
 pitee.
 Biforn the folk hir-selven strepeth she,
 And in hir smok, with heed and foot al
 bare, 895
 Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,
 And fortune ay they cursen as they goon;
 But she fro weping kepte hir yën dreye,
 Ne in this tyme word ne spak she
 noon. 900
 Hir fader, that this tyding herde anon,
 Curseth the day and tyme that nature
 Shoop him to been a lyses creature.

For out of doute this olde povre man
 Was ever in suspect of hir mariage; 905
 For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,
 That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,
 Him wolde thinke it were a dispage

To his estaat so lowe for talighte,
And voyden hir as sone as ever he
mighte. 910

Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,
For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,
And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,
He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge;
But on hir body mighte he it nat
bringe. 915
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,
Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,
That neither by hir wordes ne hir face 920
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,
Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;
Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce
Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat 925
Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee;
No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,
No pompe, no semblant of royalttee,
But ful of patient benignitee,
Discreet and prydeles, ay honourable, 930
And to hir housbonde ever meke and
stable.

Men speke of Iob and most for his hum-
blesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel en-
dyte,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a
lyte, 935
Ther can no man in humblesse him acqyte
As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

[*Pars Sexta.*]

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panik come,
Of which the fame up-sprang to more
and lesse, 940
And in the peples eres alle and some
Was couth eek, that a newe markissee
He with him broghte, in swich pompe
and richesse,
That never was ther seyn with mannes yë
So noble array in al West Lumbardye. 945

The markis, which that shoop and knew
al this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his mes-
sage
For thilke sely povre Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad
visage,
Nat with no swollen thought in hir corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir
sette, 951
And reverently and wysly she him grette.

‘Grisild,’ quod he, ‘my wille is outerly,
This mayden, that shal wedded been to
me,
Receyved be to-morwe as royally 955
As it possible is in myn hous to be.
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estaat in sitting and servyse
And heigh plesaunce, as I can best
devyse.

I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn 960
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce
After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich maner govern-
aunce;
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce;
Though thyn array be badde and yvel
biseye, 965
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.’

‘Nat only, lord, that I am glad,’ quod she,
‘To doon your lust, but I desyre also
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree
With-outen feynting, and shal evermo.
Ne never, for no wele ne no wo, 971
Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte
stente
To love yow best with al my trewe en-
tente.’

And with that word she gan the hous to
dighte,
And tables for to sette and beddes make;
And peyned hii to doon al that she
mighte, 976
Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and
shake;
And she, the moste servisable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his
halle. 980

Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,
 That with him broghte these noble chil-
 dren tweye,
 For which the peple ran to seen the sighte
 Of hir array, so richely biseye;
 And than at erst amonges hem they seye,
 That Walter was no fool, thogh that him
 leste 986
 To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the
 beste.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,
 Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,
 And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,
 And more plesant, for hir heigh lin-
 age; 991
 Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught
 plesaunce,
 Commending now the markis govern-
 aunce. —

Auctor. 'O stormy peple! unsad and
 ever untrewel! 995
 Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane,
 Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,
 For lyk the mone ay waxe ye and wane;
 Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a Iane;
 Your doom is fals, your constance yvel
 preveth, 1000
 A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth!'

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,
 Whan that the peple gazed up and down,
 For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
 To han a newe lady of hir toun. 1005
 Na-more of this make I now mencion;
 But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
 And telle hir constance and hir bisi-
 nesse. —

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing
 That to the feste was apertinent; 1010
 Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing,
 Though it were rude and somdel eek to-
 rent.
 But with glad chere to the yate is went,
 With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
 And after that doth forth hir bisi-
 nesse. 1015

With so glad chere his gestes she receyv-
 eth,

And conningly, everich in his degree,
 That no defaute no man aperceyveth;
 But ay they wondren what she mighte be
 That in so povre array was for to see, 1020
 And coude swich honour and rever-
 ence;
 And worthily they preisen hir prudence.

In al this mene whyle she ne stente
 This mayde and eek hir brother to com-
 mende
 With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente,
 So wel, that no man coude hir prys
 amende. 1026
 But atte laste, whan that these lordes
 wende
 To sitten down to mete, he gan to calle
 Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

'Grisilde,' quod he, as it were in his
 pley, 1030
 'How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beau-
 tee?'
 'Right wel,' quod she, 'my lord; for, in
 good fey,
 A fairer say I never noon than she.
 I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee;
 And so hope I that he wol to yow
 sende 1035
 Plesance y-nogh un-to your lyves ende.

O thing biseke I yow and warne also,
 That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge
 This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo;
 For she is fostred in hir norishinge 1040
 More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,
 She coude nat adversitee endure
 As coude a povre fostred creature.'

And whan this Walter say hir pacience,
 Hir glade chere and no malice at al, 1045
 And he so ofte had doon to hir offence,
 And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
 Continuing ever hir innocence overal,
 This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse
 To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse.

'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn,' quod
 he, 1051
 'Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed;
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
 In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.

Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfast-
 nesse, — 1056
 And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;
 She ferde as she had stert out of a
 sleep, 1060
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.
 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by god that for us
 deyde,
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
 Ne never hadde, as god my soule save !

This is thy doghter which thou hast sup-
 posed 1065
 To be my wyf; that other feithfully
 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
 Thou bare him in thy body trewely.
 At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat
 seye 1070
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children
 tweye.

And folk that otherweyes han seyde of me,
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this
 dede
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,
 But for tassaye in thee thy wommanhede,
 And nat to sleen my children, god for-
 bede ! 1076
 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
 Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she
 falleth
 For pitous Ioye, and after hir swowninge
 She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir
 calleth, 1081
 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
 Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
 She batheth bothe hir visage and hir
 heres. 1085

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to
 here !
 'Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow,'
 quod she,
 'That ye han saved me my children
 dere !

Now rekke I never to ben deed right
 here; 1090
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your
 grace,
 No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace !

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,
 Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
 That cruel houndes or som foul ver-
 myne 1095
 Hadde eten yow; but god, of his mercy,
 And your benigne fader tendrely
 Hath doon yow kept; and in that same
 stounde
 Al sodeynly she swappte adoun to grounde.

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem tem-
 brace, 1101
 That with greet sleighte and greet diffi-
 cultee
 The children from hir arm they gonne
 arace.
 O many a teer on many a pitous face
 Doun ran of hem that stoden hir bi-
 syde; 1105
 Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh;
 She ryseth up, abaysed, from hir traunce,
 And every wight hir Ioye and feste mak-
 eth,
 Til she hath caught agayn hir conte-
 nance. 1110
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce,
 That it was deyntee for to seen the chere
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met
 y-fere.

These ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
 Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array, 1116
 And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon
 Up-on hir hede, they in-to halle hir broghte,
 And ther she was honoured as hir
 oghte. 1120

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
 For every man and womman dooth his
 might
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende
 Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.

For more solempne in every mannes
sight 1125
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Liven these two in concord and in reste,
And richely his doghter married he 1130
Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Itaille; and than in pees and reste
His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage 1135
In reste and pees, after his fader day;
And fortunat was eek in mariage,
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath been in olde tymes yore, 1140
And herkneth what this auctour seith
therefore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves
sholde
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable, though they wolde;
But for that every wight, in his de-
gree, 1145
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde; therfor Petrark wryteth
This storie, which with heigh style he
endyteth.

For, sith a womman was so pacient
Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte
Receyven al in gree that god us sent; 1151
For greet skile is, he preve that he wroghte.
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith seint Iame, if ye his pistel rede,
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede, 1155

And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee

Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse;
Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,
Ere we were born, knew al our frele-
tee; 1160
And for our beste is al his governaunce;
Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce.*

But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go: —
It were ful hard to finde now a dayes
In al a toun Grisildes three or two; 1165
For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras, that though the coyne be fair at
yë,
It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.

For which heer, for the wyves love of
Bathe, 1170
Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene
In heigh maistrye, and elles were it scathe,
I wol with lusty herte fresshe and grene
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,
And lat us stinte of earnestful matere: —
Herkneth my song, that seith in this man-
ere. 1176

Leuoy de Chaucer.

Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,
And bothe atones buried in Itaille;
For which I crye in open audience, 1179
No wedded man so hardy be tassaille
His wyves pacience, in hope to finde
Grisildes, for in certein he shall faille!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille,
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To wryte of yow a storie of swich mer-
vaille 1186

As of Grisildis pacient and kinde;
Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hir
entraill!

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,

* It seems to have been Chaucer's intention, in the first instance, to end this Tale here. Hence, we find, in MSS. E. Hn. Cm. Dd., the following genuine, but rejected stanza, suitable for insertion at this point: —

Bihold the merye wordes of the Hoste.

This worthy Clerk, whan ended was his tale,
Our hoste seyde, and swoor by goddes bones,

'Me were lever than a barel ale
My wyf at hoom had herd this legende
ones;
This is a gentil tale for the nones,
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;
But thing that wol nat be, lat it be stille.'

*Here endeth the Tale of the Clerk of
Oxenford.*

But evere answereth at the countre-
taille; 1190

Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,
But sharply tak on yow the governaille.
Emprinteth wel this lesson in your minde
For commune profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewyves, stondesth at defence, 1195
Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille;
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon
offence.

And scendre wyves, feble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde;
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow con-
saille. 1200

Ne dred hem nat, do hem no rever-
ence;

For though thyn housbonde armed be in
maille,

The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aven-
taille;

In Ialousye I rede eek thou him binde,
And thou shalt make him couche as
dooth a quaille. 1206

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence
Shew thou thy visage and thyn appar-
aille;

If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence,
To gete thee freendes ay do thy trav-
aille; 1210

Be ay of chere as light as leef on linde,
And lat him care, and wepe, and wringe,
and waille!

Here endeth the Clerk of Oxonford his Tale.

THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Marchantes Tale.

* WEPING and wayling, care, and other
sorwe

I know y-nogh, on even and a-morwe,
Quod the Marchaunt, 'and so don othere
mo 1215

That wedded been, I trowe that it be so.
For, wel I woot, it fareth so with me.

I have a wyf, the worste that may be;
For though the feend to hir y-coupled
were,

She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel
swere. 1220

What sholde I yow reherce in special
Hir hye malice? she is a shrewe at al.
Ther is a long and large difference
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience

And of my wyf the passing crueltee. 1225
Were I unbounden, al-so moot I thee!

I wolde never eft comen in the snare.

We wedded men live in sorwe and care;
Assaye who-so wol, and he shal finde
I seye sooth, by seint Thomas of Inde,
As for the more part, I sey nat alle. 1231
God shilde that it sholde so bifalle!

A! good sir hoost! I have y-wedded
be

These monthes two, and more nat, pardee;
And yet, I trowe, he that all his lyve
Wyflees hath been, though that men
wolde him ryve 1236

Un-to the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here
Coude tellen of my wyves cursednesse!

'Now,' quod our hoost, 'Marchaunt,
so god yow blesse, 1240

Sin ye so muchel knowen of that art,
Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part.'

'Gladly,' quod he, 'but of myn owene
sore,

For sory herte, I telle may na-more.'

THE MARCHANTES TALE.

Here biginneth the Marchantes Tale.

WHYLOM ther was dwellinge in Lum-
bardye 1245

A worthy knight, that born was of Pavye,
In which he lived in greet prosperitee;
And sixty yeer a wyfles man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delyt

On wommen, ther-as was his appetyt, 1250
As doon this folcs that ben seculer.

And whan that he was passed sixty yeer,
Were it for holinesse or for dotage,
I can nat seye, but swich a greet corage
Hadde this knight to been a wedded
man, 1255

That day and night he dooth al that he
can

Tespyen where he mighte wedded be;
Preyinge our lord to granten him, that
he

Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf
That is bitwixe an housbond and his
wyf; 1260

And for to live under that holy bond
With which that first god man and
womman bond.

'Non other lyf,' seyde he, 'is worth a
bene;

For wedlok is so esy and so clene,
That in this world it is a paradys.' 1265
Thus seyde this olde knight, that was so
wys.

And certainly, as sooth as god is king,
To take a wyf, it is a glorious thing,
And namely whan a man is old and
hoor;

Thanne is a wyf the fruit of his tresor.
Than sholde he take a yong wyf and a
feir, 1271

On which he mighte engendren him an
heir,

And lede his lyf in Ioye and in solas,
Wher-as thise bacheleres singe 'allas,'
Whan that they finden any adversitee
In love, which nis but childish vanitee.

And trewely it sit wel to be so, 1277
That bacheleres have often peyne and
wo;

On brotel ground they builde, and
brotelnesse 1279

They finde, whan they wene sikernesse.
They live but as a brid or as a beste,
In libertee, and under non areste,
Ther-as a wedded man in his estaat
Liveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat,
Under the yok of mariage y-bounde;
Wel may his herte in Ioye and blisse
habounde. 1286

For who can be so buxom as a wyf?
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf
To kepe him, syk and hool, as is his
make?

For wele or wo, she wol him nat for-
sake. 1290

She nis nat wery him to love and serve,
Thogh that he lye bedrede til he sterve.
And yet somme clerkes seyn, it nis nat so,
Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho.
What force thogh Theofraste liste lye?
'Ne take no wyf,' quod he, 'for hous-
bondryc, 1296

As for to spare in houshold thy dis-
pence;

A trewe servant dooth more diligence,
Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene
wyf. 1299

For she wol clayme half part al hir lyf;
And if that thou be syk, so god me save,
Thy verray frendes or a trewe knave
Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth
ay

After thy good, and hath don many a day.'
And if thou take a wyf un-to thyn hold,
Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold.

This sentence, and an hundred thinges
worse, 1307

Wryteth this man, ther god his bones
corse!

But take no kepe of al swich vanitee;
Deffye Theofraste and herke me. 1310

A wyf is goddes yifte verrailly;
Alle other maner yiftes hardily,
As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune, 1314
That passen as a shadwe upon a wal.
But dredelees, if pleylnly speke I shal,

A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure,
 Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure.
 Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;
 He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent; 1320
 He liveth helples and al desolat,
 I speke of folk in seculer estaat.
 And herke why, I sey nat this for noght,
 That womman is for mannes help y-wroght.
 The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked, 1325
 And saugh him ai allone, bely-naked,
 God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,
 'Lat us now make an help un-to this man
 Lyk to him-self;' and thanne he made him Eve.
 Heer may ye se, and heer-by may ye preve, 1330
 That wyf is mannes help and his confort,
 His paradys terrestre and his disport.
 So buxom and so vertuouus is she,
 They moste nedes live in unitee.
 O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse, 1335
 Hath bot on herte, in wele and in distresse.
 A wyf! a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
 How mighte a man han any adversitee
 That hath a wyf? certes, I can nat seye.
 The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye 1340
 Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke.
 If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke;
 She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel;
 Al that hir housbonde lust, hir lyketh weel;
 She seith not ones 'nay,' whan he seith 'ye.' 1345
 'Do this,' seith he; 'al redy, sir,' seith she.
 O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,
 Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuouus,
 And so commended and appreveed eek,
 That every man that halt him worth a leek, 1350
 Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyf
 Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf;

Or elles preye to god him for to sende
 A wyf, to laste un-to his lyves ende. 1354
 For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse;
 He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse,
 So that he werke after his wyves reed;
 Than may he boldly beren up his heed,
 They been so trewe and ther-with-al so wyse;
 For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse, 1360
 Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede.
 Lo, how that Iacob, as thise clerkes rede,
 By good conseil of his moder Rebekke,
 Bond the kides skin aboute his nekke;
 Thurgh which his fadres benisoun he wan. 1365
 Lo, Iudith, as the storie eek telle can,
 By wys conseil she goddes peple kepte,
 And slow him, Olofernus, whyl he slepte.
 Lo Abigayl, by good conseil how she
 Saved hir housbond Nabal, whan that he
 Sholde han be slayn; and loke, Ester also 1371
 By good conseil delivered out of wo
 The peple of god, and made him, Mar-dochee,
 Of Assuere enhanced for to be. 1374
 Ther nis no-thing in gree superlatyf,
 As seith Senek, above an humble wyf.
 Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Caton bit;
 She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it;
 And yet she wol obeye of curteisye.
 A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye; 1380
 Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe,
 Ther-as ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe.
 I warne thee, if wysly thou wolt wirche,
 Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche.
 If thou lovest thy-self, thou lovest thy wyf; 1385
 No man hateth his flesh, but in his lyf
 He fostreth it, and therefore bidde I thee,
 Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt never thee.
 Housbond and wyf, what so men Iape or pleye, 1389
 Of worldly folk holden the siker weye;

They been so knit, ther may noon harm
bityde;

And namely, up-on the wyves syde.
For which this Ianuarie, of whom I
tolde,

Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde,
The lusty lyf, the vertuous quite, 1395
That is in mariage hony-swete;
And for his freendes on a day he sente,
To tellen hem theeffect of his entente.

With face said, his tale he hath hem
told;

He seyde, 'freendes, I am hoor and old,
And almost, god wot, on my pittes
brinke; 1401

Up-on my soule somewhat moste I thinke.
I have my body folily despended;
Blessed be god, that it shal been
amended!

For I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man,
And that anon in al the haste I can,
Un-to som mayde fair and tendre of age.

I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage
Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde; 1409

And I wol fonde tespyen, on my syde,
To whom I may be wedded hastily.

But for-as-muche as ye ben mo than I,
Ye shullen rather swich a thing espyen
Than I, and wher me best were to allyen.

But o thing warne I yow, my freendes
dere, 1415

I wol non old wyf han in no manere.
She shal nat passe twenty yeer, certayn;
Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful
fayn.

Bet is, quod he, 'a pyk than a pikerel;
And bet than old boef is the tendre veel.

I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,
It is but bene-straw and greet forage.

And eek this olde widwes, god it woot,
They conne so muchel craft on Wades
boot,

So muchel broken harm, whan that hem
leste, 1425

That with hem sholde I never live in
reste.

For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis;
Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.

But certeynly, a yong thing may men
gye,

Right as men may warm wex with handes
plye. 1430

Wherfore I sey yow pleynly, in a clause,

I wol non old wyf han right for this
cause.

For if so were, I hadde swich mis-
chaunce,

That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce,
Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,

And go streight to the delvel, whan I
dye. 1436

Ne children sholde I none up-on hir
geten;

Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,
Than that myn heritage sholde falle

In straunge hand, and this I tell yow
alle. 1440

I dote nat, I woot the cause why
Men sholde wedde, and forthermore wot

I,
Ther speketh many a man of mariage,

That woot na-more of it than woot my
page,

For whiche causes man sholde take a
wyf. 1445

If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,
Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,

By-cause of leveful procreacioun
Of children, to thonour of god above,

And nat only for paramour or love; 1450
And for they sholde lecherye eschue,

And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben
due;

Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen
other

In meschief, as a suster shal the brother;
And live in chastitee ful holily. 1455

But sires, by your leve, that am nat I.
For god be thanked, I dar make avaunt,

I fele my limes stark and suffisaunt
To do al that a man bilongeth to;

I woot my-selven best what I may do. 1460
Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree

That blosmeth er that fruyt y-woxen be;
A blosmy tree nis neither drye ne deed.

I fele me nowher hoor but on myn heed;
Myn herte and alle my limes been as

grene 1465
As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene.

And sin that ye han herd al myn entente,
I prey yow to my wil ye wole assente.'

Diverse men diversely him tolde
Of mariage manye ensamples olde. 1470

Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, cer-
teyn;

But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,

As al day falleth altercacioun
 Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun, 1474
 Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,
 Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,
 Iustinus soothly called was that other.
 Placebo seyde, 'o Ianuarie, brother,
 Ful litel nede had ye, my lord so dere,
 Conseil to axe of any that is here; 1480
 But that ye been so ful of sapience,
 That yow ne lyketh, for your heighe
 prudence,
 To weyven fro the word of Salomon.
 This word seyde he un-to us everichon :
 "Wirk alle thing by conseil," thus seyde
 he, 1485
 "And thanne shaltow nat repentee thee."
 But though that Salomon spak swich a
 word,
 Myn owene dere brother and my lord,
 So wisly god my soule bringe at reste,
 I hold your owene conseil is the
 beste. 1490
 For pryver myn, of me tak this motyf,
 I have now been a court-man al my lyf.
 And god it woot, though I unworthy be,
 I have stonden in ful greet degree
 Abouten lordes of ful heigh estaat; 1495
 Yet hadde I never with noon of hem de-
 baat.
 I never hem contraried, trewely;
 I woot wel that my lord can more than I.
 What that he seith, I holde it ferme and
 stable; 1499
 I seye the same, or elles thing semblable.
 A ful gret fool is any conseilour,
 That serveth any lord of heigh honour,
 That dar presume, or elles thenken it,
 That his conseil sholde passe his lordes
 wit.
 Nay, lordes been no foles, by my fay; 1505
 Ye han your-selven shewed heer to-day
 So heigh sentence, so holly and weel,
 That I consente and conferme every-deel
 Your wordes alle, and your opinion. 1509
 By god, ther nis no man in al this toun
 Nin al Itaille, that coude bet han sayd;
 Crist halt him of this conseil wel apayd.
 And trewely, it is an heigh corage
 Of any man, that stopen is in age, 1514
 To take a yong wyf; by my fader kin,
 Your herte hangeth on a Ioly pin.
 Doth now in this matere right as yow
 leste,

For finally I holde it for the beste.
 Iustinus, that ay stille sat and herde,
 Right in this wyse to Placebo answerde :
 ' Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye;
 Sin ye han seyde, and herkneth what I
 seye. 1522
 Senek among his othere wordes wyse
 Seith, that a man oghte him right wel
 avyse,
 To whom he yeveth his lond or his
 catel. 1525
 And sin I oghte avyse me right wel
 To whom I yeve my good away fro me,
 Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be
 To whom I yeve my body; for alwey
 I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley 1530
 To take a wyf with-oute avyement.
 Men moste enquire, this is myn assent,
 Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,
 Or proud, or elles other-weys a shrewe;
 A chydester, or wastour of thy good, 1535
 Or riche, or poore, or elles mannish wood.
 Al-be it so that no man finden shal
 Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,
 Ne man ne beest, swich as men coude
 devyse;
 But nathelees, it oghte y-nough suffise 1540
 With any wyf, if so were that she hadde
 Mo gode thewes than hir vyces badde;
 And al this axeth leyser for tenquere.
 For god it woot, I have wept many a
 tere
 Ful prively, sin I have had a wyf. 1545
 Preyse who-so wole a wedded mannes lyf,
 Certein, I finde in it but cost and care,
 And observances, of alle blisses bare.
 And yet, god woot, my neighebores
 aboute, 1549
 And namely of wommen many a route,
 Seyn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,
 And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf.
 But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho.
 Ye move, for me, right as yow lyketh do;
 Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age, 1555
 How that ye entren in-to mariage,
 And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.
 By him that made water, erthe, and air,
 The yongest man that is in al this route
 Is bisy y-nogh to bringen it aboute 1560
 To han his wyf allone, trusteth me.
 Ye shul nat plesse hir fully yeres three,
 This is to scyn, to doon hir ful plesaunce.
 A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce.

I prey yow that ye be nat yvel apayd.' 1565
 'Wel,' quod this Ianuarie, 'and hastow
 sayd ?

Straw for thy Senek, and for thy prov-
 erbes,

I counte nat a panier ful of herbes
 Of scole-termes; wyser men than thow,
 As thou hast herd, assenteden right
 now 1570

To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye ?'
 'I seye, it is a cursed man,' quod he,
 'That letteth matrimoine, sikerly.'

And with that word they rysen sodeynly,
 And ben assented fully, that he sholde
 Be wedded whanne him list and wher he
 wolde. 1576

Heigh fantasye and curious businesse
 Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
 Of Ianuarie aboute his mariage. 1579
 Many fair shap, and many a fair visage
 Ther passeth thurgh his herte, night by
 night.

As who-so toke a mirour polished bright,
 And sette it in a commune market-place,
 Than sholde he see many a figure pace
 By his mirour; and, in the same wyse, 1585
 Gan Ianuarie inwith his thought devyse
 Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him
 bisyde.

He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde.
 For if that oon have beaute in hir face,
 Another stant so in the peples grace 1590
 For hir sadnesse, and hir benignitee,
 That of the peple grettest voys hath she.
 And somme were riche, and hadden
 badde name.

But natheless, bitwixe earnest and game,
 He atte laste apoynted him on oon, 1595
 And leet alle othere from his herte goon,
 And chees hir of his owene auctoritee;
 For love is blind al day, and may nat see.
 And whan that he was in his bed y-brought,
 He purtreied, in his herte and in his
 thoght, 1600

Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,
 Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and
 splendre,

Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,
 Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse.
 And whan that he on hir was conde-
 scended, 1605

Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben
 amended.

For whan that he him-self concluded
 hadde,
 Him thoughte ech other mannes wit so
 hadde,

That impossible it were to replye
 Agayn his chois, this was his fan-
 tasye. 1610

His freendes sente he to at his instance,
 And preyed hem to doon him that
 plesaunce,

That hastily they wolden to him come;
 He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and
 some.

Nedeth na-more for him to go ne
 ryde, 1615

He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.
 Placebo cam, and eek his freendes
 sone,

And alderfirst he bad hem alle a bone,
 That noon of hem none argumentes
 make

Agayn the purpos which that he hath
 take; 1620

'Which purpos was plesant to god,'
 seyde he,

'And verray ground of his prosperitee.'
 He seyde, ther was a mayden in the
 town,

Which that of beautee hadde greet re-
 noun,

Al were it so she were of smal
 degree; 1625

Suffyseth him hir youthe and hir beautee.
 Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to
 his wyf,

To lede in ese and holinesse his lyf.
 And thanked god, that he mighte han
 hire al,

That no wight of his blisse parten
 shal. 1630

And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,
 And shapen that he faille nat to spede;
 For thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at
 ese.

'Thanne is,' quod he, 'no-thing may me
 displese,

Save o thing priketh in my con-
 science, 1635

The which I wol reherce in your pres-
 ence.

I have,' quod he, 'herd seyde, ful yore
 ago,

Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,

'This is to seye, in erthe and eek in
hevene.

For though he kepe him fro the sinnes
sevene, 1640

And eek from every branche of thilke
tree,

Yet is ther so parfyt felicitee,

And so greet ese and lust in mariage,

That ever I am agast, now in myn age,

That I shal lede now so mery a lyf, 1645

So delicat, with-outhe wo and stryf,

That I shal have myn hevene in erthe
here.

For sith that verray hevene is boght so
dere,

With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,

How sholde I thanne, that live in swich
plesaunce 1650

As alle wedded men don with hir wyvis,

Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on
lyve is?

This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren
tweye,

Assoilthe me this questioun, I preye.'

Iustinus, which that hated his
folye, 1655

Answerde anon, right in his Iaperye;

And for he wolde his longe tale abregge,

He wolde noon auctoritee allegge,

But seyde, 'sire, so ther be noon obstacle
Other than this, god of his hye mir-
acle 1660

And of his mercy may so for yow wirche,

That, er ye have your right of holy
chirche,

Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,

In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf.

And elles, god forbede but he sente 1665

A wedded man him grace to repente

Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!

And therefore, sire, the beste reed I can,

Dispeire yow noght, but have in your
memorie,

Paraunter she may be your purga-
torie! 1670

She may be goddes mene, and goddes
whippe;

Than shal your soule up to hevene skippe

Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the
bowe!

I hope to god, her-after shul ye knowe,

That their nis no so greet felicitee 1675

In mariage, ne never-mo shal be,

That yow shal lette of your savacioun,

So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,

The lustes of your wyf attemprely,

And that ye plesse hir nat to amor-
ously, 1680

And that ye kepe yow eek from other
sinne.

My tale is doon: — for my wit is thinne.

Beth nat agast her-of, my brother dere.' —

(But lat us waden out of this matere.

The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han under-
stonde, 1685

Of mariage, which we have on honde,

Declared hath ful wel in litel space). —

'Fareth now wel, god have yow in his
grace.'

And with this word this Iustin and his
brother

Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of
other. 1690

For whan they sawe it moste nedes be,

They wroghten so, by sly and wys trettee,

That she, this mayden, which that Maius
highte,

As hastily as ever that she mighte,

Shal wedded be un-to this Januarie. 1695

I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,

If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,

By which that she was feffed in his lond;

Or for to herkennen of hir riche array.

But finally y-comen is the day 1700

That to the chirche bothe be they went

For to receyve the holy sacrament.

Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute
his nekke,

And bad hir be lyk Sarra and Rebekke,

In wisdom and in trouthe of ma-
riage; 1705

And seyde his orisons, as is usage,

And crouched hem, and bad god sholde
hem blesse,

And made al siker y-nogh with holinesse.

Thus been they wedded with solemp-
nitee,

And at the feste sitteth he and she 1710

With other worthy folk up-on the deys.

Al ful of Ioye and blisse is the paleys,

And ful of instruments and of vitaille,

The moste deyntevous of al Itaille.

Biforn hem stode swiche instruments of
soun, 1715

That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,

Ne maden never swich a melodye.

At every cours than cam loud min-
straleye,
That never tromped Ioab, for to here,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clere, 1720
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacus the wyn hem skinketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth up-on every wight.
For Ianuarie was bicome hir knight,
And wolde bothe assayen his corage 1725
In libertee, and eek in mariage;
And with hir fyrbrond in hir hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the
route.
And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymenëus, that god of wedding is, 1730
Saugh never his lyf so mery a wedded
man.
Hold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,
That wrytest us that ilke wedding murie
Of hir, Philologye, and him, Mercurie,
And of the songes that the Muses
songe. 1735
To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy
tonge,
For to descryven of this mariage.
Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoup-
ing age,
Ther is swich mirthe that it may nat be
written;
Assayeth it your-self, than may ye witen
If that I lye or noon in this matere. 1741
Maius, that sit with so benigne a
chere,
Hir to biholde it semed fayëryë;
Queene Ester loked never with swich an
yë 1744
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.
I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee;
But thus muche of hir beautee telle I
may,
That she was lyk the brighte morwe of
May,
Fulfilde of alle beautee and plesaunce.
This Ianuarie is ravissed in a traunce
At every time he loked on hir face; 1751
But in his herte he gan hir to manace,
That he that night in arnes wolde hir
streyne
Harder than ever Paris dide Eleyne.
But nathelees, yet hadde he greet
pitee, 1755
That thilke night offenden hir moste he;
And thoughte, 'allas! o tendre creature!

Now wolde god ye mighte wel endure
Al my corage, it is so sharp and kene;
I am agast ye shul it nat sustene. 1760
But god forbede that I dide al my might!
Now wolde god that it were woxen night,
And that the night wolde lasten evermo.
I wolde that al this peple were ago.
And finally, he doth al his labour, 1765
As he best mighte savinge his honour,
To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.
The tyme cam that reson was to ryse;
And after that, men daunce and drinken
faste,
And spyces al aboute the hous they
caste; 1770
And ful of Ioye and blisse is every man;
All but a squyer, highte Damian,
Which carf biforn the knight ful many a
day.
He was so ravissed on his lady May,
That for the verray peyne he was ny
wood; 1775
Almost he swelte and swowned ther he
stood.
So sore hath Venus hurt him with hir
brond,
As that she bar it daunsinge in hir hond.
And to his bed he wente him hastily;
Na-more of him as at this tyme speke I.
But ther I lete him wepe y-nough and
pleyne, 1781
Til fresshe May wol rewen on his peyne.
O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw
bredeth! *Auctor.*
O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!
O servant traitour, false hoomly hewe,
Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly un-
trewe, 1786
God shilde us alle from your aqueynt-
aunce!
O Ianuarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man,
Entendeth for to do thee vileinye. 1791
God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo tespye.
For in this world nis worse pestilence
Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence.
Parfourned hath the sonne his ark
diurne, 1795
No lenger may the body of him soiurne
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.
Night with his mantel, that is derk and
rude,

Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute;
For which departed is this lusty route
Fro Ianuarie, with thank on every
syde. 1801

Hom to hir houses lustily they ryde,
Wher-as they doon hir thinges as hem
leste,

And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste.
Sone after that, this hastif Ianuarie 1805
Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger
tarie.

He drinketh ipocras, clarree, and vernage
Of spyces hote, tencresen his corage;
And many a letuarie hadde he ful fyn,
Swiche as the cursed monk dan Con-
stantyn 1810

Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;
To eten hem alle, he nas no-thing eschu.
And to his privee freendes thus seyde he:
'For goddes love, as sone as it may be,
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.'
And they han doon right as he wol de-
vyse 1816

Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille
as stoon;

And whan the bed was with the preest
y-blessed.

Out of the chambre hath every wight him
dressed. 1820

And Ianuarie hath faste in armes take
His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
He lulleth hir, he kisseth hir ful ofte
With thikke bristles of his berd unsofte,
Lyk to the skin of houndfish, sharp as
brere, 1825

For he was shave al newe in his manere.
He rubbeth hir aboute hir tendre face,
And seyde thus, 'allas! I moot trespass
To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly
offende,

Er tyme come that I wil doun de-
scende. 1830

But nathelees, considereth this,' quod he,
'Ther nis no werkman, what-so-ever he
be,

That may bothe werke wel and hastily;
This wol be doon at leyser paritly. 1834

It is no fors how longe that we pleye;
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye;
And blessed be the yok that we been
inne,

For in our actes we mowe do no sinne.

A man may do no sinne with his wyf,
Ne hurte him-selven with his owene
knyf; 1840

For we han leve to pleye us by the
lawe.'

Thus laboureth til that the daygan dawe;
And than he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,
And upright in his bed than sitteth he,
And after that he sang ful loude and
clere, 1845

And kiste his wyf, and made wantoun
chere.

He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,
And ful of largon as a flekked pye.
The slakke skin aboute his nekke
shaketh,

Why! that he sang; so chaunteth he and
craketh. 1850

But god wot what that May thoughte in
hir herte,

Whan she him saugh up sittinge in his
sherte,

In his night-cappe, and with his nekke
lene;

She preyseth nat his pleying worth a
bene.

Than seide he thus, 'my reste wol I
take; 1855

Now day is come, I may no lenger
wake.'

And doun he leyde his heed, and sleep
til pryme.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his
tyme,

Up ryseth Ianuarie; but fresshe May
Holdeth hir chambre un-to the fourthe
day, 1860

As usage is of wyves for the beste.
For every labour som-tyme moot han
reste,

Or elles longe may he nat endure;
This is to seyn, no lyves creature,

Be it of fish, or brid, or beest, 'or
man. 1865

Now wol I speke of woful Da-
mian, *Auctor.*

That languissbeth for love, as ye shul
here;

Therefore I speke to him in this manere:
I seye, 'O sely Damian, alas!

Answer to my demaunde, as in this
cas, 1870

How shaltow to thy lady fresshe May

Telle thy wo? She wole alwey seye
"nay";

Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo
biwreye;

God be thyn help, I can no better seye.'

This syke Damian in Venus fyr 1875

So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr;

For which he putte his lyf in aventure

No lenger mighte he in this wyse endure;

But prively a penner gan he borwe,

And in a lettre wroote he al his sorwe, 1880

In manere of a compleynt or a lay,

Un-to his faire fresshe lady May.

And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,

He hath it put, and leyde it at his herte.

The mone that, at noon, was, thilke
day 1885

That Ianuarie hath wedded fresshe May,

In two of Taur, was in-to Cancre gliden;

So longe hath Maius in hir chambre

biden,

As custume is un-to thise nobles alle.

A bryde shal nat eten in the halle, 1890

Til dayes foure or three dayes atte leste

Y-passed been; than lat hir go to feste.

The fourthe day compleet fro noon to

noon,

Whan that the heighe masse was y-doon,

In halle sit this Ianuarie, and May 1895

As fresh as is the brighte someres day.

And so bifel, how that this gode man

Remembred him upon this Damian,

And seyde, 'Seinte Marie! how may

this be,

That Damian entendeth nat to me? 1900

Is he ay syk, or how may this bityde?'

His squyeres, whiche that stoden ther

bisyde,

Excused him by-cause of his siknesse,

Which letted him to doon his businesse;

Noon other cause mighte make him

tarie. 1905

'That me forthinketh,' quod this Ianu-

arie,

'He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe!

If that he deyde, it were harm and

routhe;

He is as wys, discreet, and as secree

As any man I woot of his degree; 1910

And ther-to manly and eek servisable,

And for to been a thrifty man right able.

But after mete, as sone as ever I may,

I wol my-self visyte him and eek May,

To doon him al the confort that I can.'

And for that word him blessed every

man, 1916

That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,

He wolde so conforten in siknesse

His squyer, for it was a gentil dede.

'Dame,' quod this Ianuarie, 'tak good

hede, 1920

At-after mete ye, with your women

alle,

Whan ye han been in chambre out of

this halle,

That alle ye go to see this Damian;

Doth him disport, he is a gentil man;

And telleth him that I wol him visyte,

Have I no-thing but rested me a lyte;

And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde

Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.' 1928

And with that word he gan to him to

calle

A squyer, that was marchal of his halle,

And tolde him certeyn things, what he

wolde. 1931

This fresshe May hath streight hir wey

y-holde,

With alle hir women, un-to Damian.

Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,

Confortinge him as goodly as she may.

This Damian, whan that his tyme he

say, 1936

In secree wise his purs, and eek his

bille,

In which that he y-writen hadde his

wille,

Hath put in-to hir hand, with-outen

more,

Save that he syketh wonder depe and

sore, 1940

And softly to hir right thus seyde he:

'Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me;

For I am deed, if that this thing be

kid.'

This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hid,

And wente hir wey; ye gete namore of

me. 1945

But un-to Ianuarie y-comen is she,

That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.

He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte,

And leyde him doun to slepe, and that

anon.

She feyned hir as that she moste gon

Ther-as ye woot that every wight mot

nede. 1951

And whan she of this bille hath taken
 hede,
 She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,
 And in the privée softely it caste.
 Who studieth now but faire fresshe
 May? 1955
 Adoun by olde Ianuarie she lay,
 That sleep, til that the coughe hath him
 awaked;
 Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al
 naked;
 He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som plea-
 saunce,
 And seyde, hir clothes dide him encom-
 braunce, 1960
 And she obeyeth, be hir lief or looth.
 But lest that precious folk be with me
 wrooth,
 How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow
 telle;
 Or whether hir thoughte it paradys or
 helle;
 But here I lete hem werken in hir wyse
 Til evensong rong, and that they moste
 aryse. 1966
 Were it by destinee or aventure,
 Were it by influence or by nature,
 Or constellation, that in swich estat
 The hevене stood, that tyme fortunat
 Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes
 (For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn thise
 clerkes) 1972
 To any womman, for to gete hir love,
 I can nat seye; but grete god above,
 That knoweth that non act is causelees,
 He deme of al, for I wol holde my pees.
 But sooth is this, how that this fresshe
 May
 Hath take swich impression that day,
 For pitee of this syke Damian, 1979
 That from hir herte she ne dryve can
 The remembraunce for to doon him ese.
 'Certeyn,' thoughte she, 'whom that this
 thing displese,
 I rekke nocht, for here I him assure,
 To love him best of any creature,
 Though he na-more hadde than his
 sherte.' 1985
 Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
 Heer may ye se how excellent fran-
 chyse
 In women is, whan they hem narwe
 avyse.

Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,
 That hath an herte as hard as any stoon,
 Which wolde han lete him sterven in the
 place 1991
 Wel rather than han graunted him hir
 grace;
 And hem reioysen in hir cruel pryde,
 And rekke nat to been an homicyde.
 This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee, 1995
 Right of hir hande a letre made she,
 In which she graunteth him hir verray
 grace;
 Ther lakketh nocht but only day and
 place,
 Wher that she mighte un-to his lust
 suffyse:
 For it shal be right as he wol devyse.
 And whan she saugh hir time, up-on a
 day, 2001
 To visite this Damian goth May,
 And sotilly this letre down she threste
 Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste.
 She taketh him by the hand, and harde
 him twiste 2005
 So secrely, that no wight of it wiste,
 And bad him been al hool, and forth she
 wente
 To Ianuarie, whan that he for hir sente.
 Up ryseth Damian the nexte morwe,
 Al passed was his siknesse and his
 sorwe. 2010
 He kembeth him, he proyneth him and
 pyketh,
 He dooth al that his lady lust and
 lyketh;
 And eek to Ianuarie he gooth as lowe
 As ever dide a dogge for the bowe.
 He is so plesant un-to every man, 2015
 (For craft is al, who-so that do it can)
 That every wight is fayn to speke him
 good;
 And fully in his lady grace he stood.
 Thus lete I Damian aboute his nede,
 And in my tale forth I wol procede. 2020
 Somme clerkes holden that felicitee
 Stant in delyt, and therefor certeyn he,
 This noble Ianuarie, with al his might,
 In honest wyse, as longeth to a knight,
 Shoop him to live ful deliciously. 2025
 His housinge, his array, as honestly
 To his degree was maked as a kinges.
 Amonges othere of his honest thinges,
 He made a gardin, walled al with stoon;

So fair a gardin woot I nowher noon. 2030
 For out of doute, I verraily suppose,
 That he that wroot the Romance of the
 Rose

Ne coude of it the beautee wel devyse;
 Ne Priapus ne mighte nat suffyse,
 Though he be god of gardins, for to
 telle 2035

The beautee of the gardin and the welle,
 That stood under a laurer alwey grene.
 Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his quene,
 Proserpina, and al hir fayërye

Disporten hem and maken melodye 2040
 Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men
 tolde.

This noble knight, this Ianuarie the
 olde,
 Swich deintee hath in it to walke and
 pleye,

That he wol no wight suffren bere the
 keye

Save he him-self; for of the smale wiket
 He bar alwey of silver a smal cliket, 2046
 With which, whan that him leste, he it
 unshette.

And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette
 In somer seson, thider wolde he go,
 And May his wyf, and no wight but they
 two; 2050

And thinges whiche that were nat doon
 a-bedde,

He in the gardin parfourned hem and
 spelde.

And in this wyse, many a mery day,
 Lived this Ianuarie and fresshe May.
 But worldly Ioye may nat alwey dure 2055
 To Ianuarie, ne to no creature.

O sodeyn hap, o thou fortune in-
 stable, *Auctor.*

Lyk to the scorioun so deceivable,
 That flaterest with thyn heed when thou
 wolt stinge;

Thy tayl is death, thurgh thyn envenim-
 inge. 2060

O brotil Ioye! o swete venim queynte!
 O monstre, that so subtilly canst peynte
 Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
 That thou deceyvest bothe more and lesse!
 Why hastow Ianuarie thus deceyved, 2065
 That haddest him for thy ful frend re-
 ceyed?

And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise
 yën,

For sorwe of which desyreth he to dyen.
 Allas! this noble Ianuarie free,
 Amidde his lust and his prosperitee, 2070
 Is woxen blind, and that al sodeynly.
 He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;
 And ther-with-al the fyr of Ialousye,
 Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som
 folye,

So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn
 That som man bothe him and hir had
 slayn. 2076

For neither after his death, nor in his lyf,
 Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,
 But ever live as widwe in clothes blake,
 Soul as the turtle that lost hath hir
 make. 2080

But atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,
 His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;
 For whan he wiste it may noon other be,
 He paciently took his adversitee;
 Save, out of doute, he may nat for-
 goon 2085

That he nas Ialous evermore in oon;
 Which Ialousye it was so outrageous,
 That neither in halle, nin noon other hous,
 Ne in noon other place, never-the-mo,
 He nolde suffre hir for to ryde or go, 2090
 But-if that he had hand on hir alway;
 For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,
 That loveth Damian so benignely,
 That she mot outhur dyen sodeynly,
 Or elles she mot han him as hir leste; 2095
 She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.

Up-on that other syde Damian
 Bicomen is the sorwefulleste man
 That ever was; for neicher night ne day
 Ne mighte he speke a word to fresshe
 May, 2100

As to his purpos, of no swich matere,
 But-if that Ianuarie moste it here,
 That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo.
 But nathelees, by wryting to and fro
 And privee signes, wiste he what she
 mente; 2105

And she knew cek the fyn of his entente.
 O Ianuarie, what mighte it thee
 availle, *Auctor.*

Thou mightest see as fer as shippes saille?
 For also good is blind deceyved be,
 As be deceyved whan a man may se. 2110
 Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hundred
 yën,

For al that ever he coude poure or pryen,

Yet was he blent; and, god wot, so ben
mo,

That wonder wisly that it be nat so.

Passé over is an ese, I sey na-more. 2115

This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,
In warme wex hath emprented the cliket,
That Ianuarie bar of the smale wiket,
By which in-to his gardin ofte he wente.
And Damian, that knew al hir entente,
The cliket countrefeted prively; 2121
Ther nis na-more to seye, but hastily
Som wonder by this cliket shal bityde,
Which ye shul heren, if ye wole abyde.

O noble Ovyde, ful sooth seystou, god
woot! *Auctor.*

What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and
hoot, 2126

That he nil finde it out in som manere?
By Piramus and Tesbee may men lere;
Thogh they were kept ful longe streite
overal,

They ben accorded, rouninge thurgh a
wal, 2130

Ther no wight coude han founde out
swich a sleighte.

But now to purpos; er that dayes eighte
Were passed, er the monthe of Iuil, bifil
That Ianuarie hath caught so greet a wil,
Thurgh eggng of his wyf, him for to
pleye 2135

In his gardin, and no wight but they
tweye,

That in a morwe un-to this May seith he:
'Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free;
The turtles vois is herd, my douve swete;
The winter is goon, with alle his reynes
wete; 2140

Com forth now, with thyn eyën columbyn!
How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!
The gardin is enclosed al aboute;

Com forth, my whyte spouse; out of doute,
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o
wyf! 2145

No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf.
Com forth, and lat us taken our disport;
I chees thee for my wyf and my confort.'

Swiche olde lewed wordes used he;
On Damian a signe made she, 2150

That he sholde go biforen with his cliket:
This Damian thanne hath opened the
wiket,

And in he stirte, and that in swich man-
ere,

That no wight mighte it see neither
y-here;

And stille he sit under a bush anoon. 2155

This Ianuarie, as blind as is a stoon,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
In-to his fresshe gardin is ago,
And clapte to the wiket sodeynly.

'Now, wyf,' quod he, 'heer nis but thou
and I, 2160

That art the creature that I best love.
For, by that lord that sit in heven above,
Lever ich hadde dyen on a knyf,
Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf!

For goddes sake, think how I thee
chees, 2165

Noght for no coveityse, doutelees,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And thogh that I be old, and may nat
see,

Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow
why.

Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne
ther-by; 2170

First, love of Crist, and to your-self hon-
our,

And al myn heritage, toun and tour;
I yeve it yow, maketh chartres as yow
leste;

This shal be doon to-morwe er sonne
reste. 2174

So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse,
I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.
And thogh that I be Ialous, wyte me
noght.

Ye been so depe enprented in my thought,
That, whan that I considere your beautee,
And ther-with-al the unlykly elde of
me, 2180

I may nat, certes, thogh I sholde dye,
Forbere to been out of your companye
For verray love; this is with-outen doute.
Now kis me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute.'

This fresshe May, whan she these
wordes herde, 2185

Benignely to Ianuarie answerde,
But first and forward she bigan to wepe,
'I have,' quod she, 'a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour, 2189

And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,
Which that I have assured in your hond,
Whan that the preest to yow my body
bond;

Wherfore I wole answer in this manere

By the leve of yow, my lord so dere : 2194
I prey to god, that never dawe the day
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman
may,

If ever I do un-to my kin that shame,
Or elles I empeyre so my name,
That I be fals; and if I do that lakke,
Do strepe me and put me in a sakke, 2200
And in the nexte river do me drenche.

I am a gentil womman and no wenche.
Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever
untrewe,

And wommen have repreve of yow ay
newe.

Ye han non other contenance, I leve, 2205
But speke to us of untrust and repreve.'

And with that word she saugh wher
Damian

Sat in the bush, and coughen she bigan,
And with her finger signes made she, 2209
That Damian sholde climbe up-on a tree,
That charged was with fruit, and up he
wente;

For verrailly he knew al hir entente,
And every signe that she coude make
Wel bet than Ianuarie, hir owene make
For in a lettre she had told him al 2215
Of this matere, how he werchen shal.

And thus I lete him sitte up-on the pyrie,
And Ianuarie and May rominge myrie.

Bright was the day, and blew the fir-
mament, 2219

Phebus of gold his stremes doun bath sent,
To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.
He was that tyme *in Geminis*, as I gesse,
But litel fro his declinacioun

Of Cancer, Iovis exaltacioun. 2224

And so bifel, that brighte morwe-tyde,
That in that gardin, in the ferther syde,
Pluto, that is the king of fayërye,

And many a lady in his companye,
Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne,

Ech after other, right as any lynne — 2230
Whil that she gadered floures in the mede,

In Claudian ye may the story rede,
How in his grisly carte he hir fette: —

This king of fairye thanne adoun him sette
Up-on a bench of turves, fresh and grene,
And right anon thus seyde he to his
quene. 2236

'My wyf,' quod he, 'ther may no wight
sey nay;

Thexperience so preveth every day

The treson whiche that wommen doon to
man.

Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I
can 2240

Notable of your untrouthe and brotilnesse.
O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,
Fulfilde of sapience and of worldly glorie,
Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reson
can. 2245

Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man :
"Amonges a thousand men yet fond I
oon,

But of wommen alle fond I noon."
Thus seith the king that knoweth your
wikkednesse;

And Iesus *filius Syrak*, as I gesse, 2250
Ne speketh of yow but selde reverence.

A wilde fyr and corrupt pestilence
So falle up-on your bodies yet to-night!
Ne see ye nat this honorable knight,
By-cause, alas! that he is blind and
old, 2255

His owene man shal make him cokewold;
Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree.

Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,
Un-to this olde blinde worthy knight
That he shal have ayeyn his eyen sight,
Whan that his wyf wold doon him vil-
einye; 2261

Than shal he knowen al hir harlotrye
Both in repreve of hir and othere mo.'

'Ye shal,' quod Proserpyne, 'wol ye so;
Now, by my modres sires soule I
swere, 2265

That I shal yeven hir suffisant answee,
And alle wommen after, for hir sake;

That, though they be in any gilt y-take,
With face bold they shulle hem-self ex-
cuse,

And here hem doun that wolden hem ac-
cuse. 2270

For lakke of answer, noon of hem shal
dyen.

Al hadde man seyn a thing with bothe
his yën,

Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,
And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly,
So that ye men shul been as lewed as
gees. 2275

What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I woot wel that this Iew, this Salomon,

Fond of us wommen foles many oon.

But though that he ne fond no good
womman,
Yet hath ther founde many another man
Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertu-
ous. 2281
Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristes
hous,
With martirdom they preved hir con-
stance.
The Romayn gestes maken remembrance
Of many a verray trewe wyf also. 2285
But sire, ne be nat wrooth, al-be-it so,
Though that he seyde he fond no good
womman,
I prey yow take the sentence of the man;
He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee
Nis noon but god, that sit in Trini-
tee. 2290
Ey! for verray god, that nis but oon,
What make ye so muche of Salomon?
What though he made a temple, goddes
hous?
What though he were riche and glorious?
So what he eek a temple of false god-
dis, 2295
How mighte he do a thing that more for-
bode is?
Pardee, as faire as ye his name emplastre,
He was a lechour and an ydolastre;
And in his elde he verray god forsook.
And if that god ne hadde, as seith the
book, 2300
Y-spared him for his fadres sake, he
sholde
Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.
I sette noght of al the vileinye,
That ye of women wryte, a boterflye.
I am a womman, nedes moot I speke,
Or elles swelle til myn herte breke. 2306
For sithen he seyde that we ben Iangle-
resses,
As ever hool I mote brouke my tresses,
I shal nat spare, for no curteisyne,
To speke him harm that wolde us vil-
einye.' 2310
'Dame,' quod this Pluto, 'be no
lenger wrooth;
I yeve it up; but sith I swoor myn ooth
That I wolde graunten him his sighte
ageyn,
My word shal stonde, I warne yow,
certeyn.
I am a king, it sit me noght to lye.' 2315

'And I,' quod she, 'a queene of
fayërye.
Hir answere shal she have, I under-
take;
Lat us na-more wordes heer-of make.
For sothe, I wol no lenger yow con-
trarie.' 2319
Now lat us turne agayn to Ianuarie,
That in the gardin with his faire May
Singeth, ful merier than the papeiay,
'Yow love I best, and shal, and other
noon.'
So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon,
Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie,
Wher-as this Damian sitteth ful myrie
An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.
This fresshe May, that is so bright and
shene,
Gan for to syke, and seyde, 'allas, my
syde!
Now sir,' quod she, 'for aught that may
bityde, 2330
I moste han of the peres that I see,
Or I mot dye, so sore longeth me
To eten of the smale peres grene.
Help, for hir love that is of hevene
queene! 2334
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plyt
May han to fruit so greet an appetyt,
That she may dyen, but she of it have.'
'Allas!' quod he, 'that I ne had
heer a knave
That coude climbe; allas! allas!' quod
he,
'That I am blind.' 'Ye, sir, no fors,'
quod she: 2340
'But wolde ye vouche-sauf, for goddes
sake,
The pyrie inwith your armes for to
take,
(For wel I woot that ye mistruste me)
Thanne sholde I climbe wel y-nogh,'
quod she,
'So I my foot mighte sette upon your
bak.' 2345
'Certes,' quod he, 'ther-on shal be no
lak,
Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte
blood.'
He stoupeth doun, and on his bak she
stood,
And caughte her by a twiste, and up
she gooth.

Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat
wrooth; 2350
I can nat glose, I am a rude man.
And sodeynly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he
throng.
And whan that Pluto saugh this grete
wrong,
To Ianuarie he gaf agayn his sighte, 2355
And made him see, as wel as ever he
michte.
And whan that he hadde caught his
sighte agayn,
Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn.
But on his wyf his thought was evermo;
Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,
And saugh that Damian his wyf had
dressed 2361
In swich manere, it may nat ben ex-
pressed
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly:
And up he yaf a roing and a cry
As doth the moder whan the child shal
dye: 2365
'Out! help! allas! harrow!' he gan to
crye,
'O stronge lady store, what dostow?'
And she answerde, 'sir, what eyleth
yow?
Have pacience, and reson in your
minde,
I have yow holpe on bothe your eyen
blinde. 2370
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,
As me was taught, to hele with your yën,
Was no-thing bet to make yow to see
Than struggle with a man up-on a tree.
God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.'
'Struggle!' quod he, 'ye, algate in it
wente! 2376
God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth
to dyen!
He swyded thee, I saugh it with myne yën,
And elles be I hanged by the hals!'
'Thanne is,' quod she, 'my medicine
al fals; 2380
For certainly, if that ye mighte see,
Ye wolde nat seyn these wordes un-to me;
Ye han som glimsing and no parfit sighte.'
'I see,' quod he, 'as wel as ever I
michte,

Thonked be god! with bothe myne
eyen two, 2385
And by my trouthe, me thoughte he
dide thee so.'
'Ye maze, maze, gode sire,' quod she,
'This thank have I for I have maad yow
see;
Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was so
kinde!'
'Now, dame,' quod he, 'lat al passe
out of minde. 2390
Com down, my lief, and if I have mis-
sayd,
God help me so, as I am yvel apayd.
But, by my fader soule, I wende han
seyn,
How that this Damian had by thee
leyn,
And that thy smok had leyn up-on his
breast.' 2395
'Ye, sire,' quod she, 'ye may wene as
yow lest;
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his
sleep,
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep
Up-on a thing, ne seen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed verraily; 2400
Right so a man, that longe hath blind
y-be,
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-see,
First whan his sighte is newe come
ageyn,
As he that hath a day or two y-seyn. 2404
Til that your sighte y-satled be a while,
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.
Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevене
king,
Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing,
And it is al another than it semeth.
He that misconceyveh, he misdemeth.'
And with that word she leep down for
the tree. 2411
This Ianuarie, who is glad but he?
He kisseth hir, and clippeth hir ful ofte,
And on hir wombe he stroketh hir ful
softe, 2414
And to his palays hoom he hath hir lad.
Now, gode men, I pray yow to be glad.
Thus endeth heer my tale of Ianuarie;
God blesse us and his moder Seinte
Marie!

Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Ianuarie.

EPILOGUE TO THE MERCHANTS TALE.

'Ey! goddes mercy!' seyde our Hoste
 tho,
 'Now swich a wyf I pray god kepe me
 fro! 2420
 Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees
 In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees
 Ben they, us sely men for to deceyve,
 And from a sothe ever wol they weyve;
 By this Marchauntes Tale it preveth
 weel. 2425
 But doutelees, as trewe as any steel
 I have a wyf, though that she povre be;
 But of hir tonge a labbing shrew is she,
 And yet she hath an heap of vyces mo;

Ther-of no fors, lat alle swiche thinges
 go. 2430
 But, wite ye what? in conseil be it seyde,
 Me reweth sore I am un-to hir teyd.
 For, and I sholde rekenen every vyce
 Which that she hath, y-wis, I were to
 nyce, 2434
 And cause why; it sholde reported be
 And told to hir of somme of this meynce;
 Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,
 Sin wommen connen outen swich chaf-
 fare;
 And eek my wit suffyseth nat ther-to
 To tellen al; wherfor my tale is do.' 2440

GROUP F.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

[THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE.]

'SQUIER, com neer, if it your wille be,
 And sey somewhat of love; for, certes, ye
 Connen ther-on as muche as any man.'
 'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seye as I
 can
 With hertly wille; for I wol nat rebelle 5
 Agayn your lust; a tale wol I telle.
 Have me excused if I speke amis,
 My wil is good; and lo, my tale is this.

Here biginneth the Squieres Tale.

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,
 Ther dwelte a king, that werreyed
 Russye, 10
 Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty
 man.
 This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
 That ther nas no-where in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle thing; 15
 Him lakked nought that longeth to a
 king.

As of the secte of which that he was
 born
 He kepte his lay, to which that he was
 sworn;
 And ther-to he was hardy, wys, and
 riche,
 And piëtous and iust, alwey y-liche. 20
 Sooth of his word, benigne and honour-
 able,
 Of his corage as any centre stable;
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desir-
 ous
 As any bachelor of al his hous.
 A fair persone he was and fortunat, 25
 And kepte alwey so wel royal estat,
 That ther was nowher swich another
 man.
 This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
 Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf, 30
 That other sone was cleped Cambalo.
 A doghter hadde this worthy king also,
 That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee, 34
 It lyth nat in my tonge, nin my conning;

I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing.
 Myn English eek is insufficient;
 It moste been a rethor excellent,
 That coude his colours longing for that
 art,
 If he sholde hir discryven every part. 40
 I am non swich, I moot speke as I can.
 And so bifel that, whan this Cam-
 binskan
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,
 He leet the feste of his nativitee 45
 Don cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,
 The last Idus of March, after the yeer.
 Phebus the sonne ful Ioly was and cleer;
 For he was leet his exaltacioun
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun 50
 In aries, the colerik hote signe.
 Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,
 For whiche the foules, agayn the sonne
 shene,
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,
 Ful loude songen hir affeccions; 55
 Him semed han geten hem proteccioun
 Agayn the swerd of winter kene and
 cold.
 This Cambinskan, of which I have yow
 told,
 In royal vestiment sit on his deys,
 With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys, 60
 And halt his feste, so solempne and so
 riche
 That in this world ne was ther noon it
 liche.
 Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,
 Than wolde it occupye a someres day;
 And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse 6
 At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.
 I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,
 Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes.
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee
 holde, 70
 That in this lond men recche of it but
 smal;
 Ther nis no man that may reporten al.
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme,
 And for it is no fruit but los of tyme;
 Un-to my firste I wol have my recours. 75
 And so bifel that, after the thridde
 cours,
 Whyl that this king sit thus in his no-
 bleye,

Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges
 pleye
 Biforn him at the bord deliciously,
 In at the halle-dore al sodeynly 80
 Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of
 bras,
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
 Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a
 ring,
 And by his syde a naked swerd hanging;
 And up he rydeth to the heighe bord. 85
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word
 For merveille of this knight; him to bi-
 holde
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.
 This strange knight, that cam thus
 sodeynly,
 Al armed save his heed ful richely, 90
 Salueth king and queen, and lordes alle,
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce
 As wel in speche as in contenance,
 That Gawain, with his olde curteisye, 95
 Though he were come ageyn out of
 Fairye,
 Ne coude him nat amende with a word.
 And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
 He with a manly voys seith his message,
 After the forme used in his langage, 100
 With-ouen vyce of sillable or of lettre;
 And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it
 lere;
 Al-be-it that I can nat sounne his
 style, 105
 Ne can nat climben over so heigh a
 style,
 Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
 Thus muche amounteth al that ever he
 mente,
 If it so be that I have it in minde.
 He seyde, 'the king of Arabie and of
 Inde, 110
 My lige lord, on this solempne day
 Salueth yow as he best can and may,
 And sendeth yow, in honour of your
 feste,
 By me, that am al redy at your heste,
 This stede of bras, that esily and wel 115
 Can, in the space of o day naturel,
 This is to seyn, in foure and twenty
 houres,

Wher-so yow list, in droghte or elles
shoures,

Beren your body in-to every place
To which your herte wilneth for to
pace 120

With-uten wem of yow, thurgh foul or
fair;

Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more
With-uten harm, til ye be ther yow
leste, 125

Though that ye slepen on his bak or
reste;

And turne ayeyn, with wrything of a pin.
He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin;
He wayted many a constellacioun

Er he had doon this operacioun; 130
And knew ful many a seel and many a
bond.

This mirour eek, that I have in myn
hond,

Hath swich a might, that men may in it
see

Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Un-to your regne or to your-self also; 135
And openly who is your freend or foo.

And over al this, if any lady bright
Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,
If he be fals, she shal his treson see,

His newe love and al his subtiltee 140
So openly, that ther shal no-thing hyde.
Wherfor, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour and this ring, that ye may
see,

He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
Your excellente doghter that is here. 145

The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,
Is this; that, if hir lust it for to were
Up-on hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
Ther is no foul that fleeth under the
hevene

That she ne shal wel understonde his
stevne, 150

And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
And answeere him in his langage ageyn.
And every gras that groweth up-on rote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do
bote,

Al be his woundes never so depe and
wyde. 155

This naked swerd, that hangeth by my
syde,

Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye
smyte,

Thurgh-out his armure it wol kerve and
byte,

Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;
And what man that is wounded with the
strook 160

Shal never be hool til that yow list,
of grace,

To stroke him with the platte in thilke
place

Ther he is hurt: this is as muche to
seyn,

Ye mote with the platte swerd ageyn
Stroke him in the wounde, and it wol
close; 165

This is a verray sooth, with-uten glose,
It failleth nat whyl it is in your hold.'

And whan this knight hath thus his
tale told,

He rydeth out of halle, and doun he
lighte.

His stede, which that shoon as sonne
bryghte, 170

Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.
This knight is to his chambre lad anon,
And is unarmed and to mete y-set.

The presentes ben ful royally y-fet,
This is to seyn, the swerd and the
mirour, 175

And born anon in-to the heighe tour
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore;
And un-to Canacee this ring was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.

But sikerly, with-uten any fable, 180
The hors of bras, that may nat be re-
mewed,

It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.
Ther may no man out of the place it
dryve

For noon engyn of windas or polyve;
And cause why, for they can nat the
craft. 185

And therefore in the place they han it
laft

Til that the knight hath taught hem the
manere

To voyden him, as ye shal after here.

Greet was the prees that swarmeth to
and fro, 189

To gauren on this hors that stondesth so;
For it so heigh was, and so brood and
long,

So wel proporcioned for to ben strong,
 Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye;
 Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of yē
 As it a gentil Poileys courser were. 195
 For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,
 Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende
 In no degree, as al the peple wende.
 But evermore hir moste wonder was,
 How that it coude goon, and was of
 bras; 200
 It was of Fairye, as the peple semed.
 Diverse folk diversely they demed;
 As many hedes, as many wittes ther
 been.
 They murmureden as dooth a swarm of
 been,
 And maden skiles after hir fantasies, 205
 Rehersinge of these olde poetryes,
 And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
 The hors that hadde winges for to flee;
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,
 That broghte Troye to destruccion, 210
 As men may in these olde gestes rede.
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is evermore in
 drede;
 I trowe som men of armes been ther-
 inne,
 That shapen hem this citee for to winne.
 It were right good that al swich thing
 were knowe.' 215
 Another rownded to his felawe lowe,
 And seyde, 'he lyeth, it is rather lyk
 An apparence y-maad by som magyk,
 As Iogelours pleyen at these festes grete.'
 Of sondry doutes thus they Iangle and
 trete, 220
 As lewed peple demeth comunly
 Of things that ben maad more subtilly
 Than they can in her lewednes compre-
 hende;
 They demen gladly to the badder ende.
 And somme of hem wondred on the
 mirour, 225
 That born was up in-to the maister-tour,
 How men mighte in it swiche thinges
 see.
 Another answerde, and seyde it mighte
 wel be
 Naturelly, by composiciouns
 Of angles and of slye reflexiouns, 230
 And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
 They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,
 And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves

Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,
 As knowen they that han hir bokes
 herd. 235
 And othere folk han wondred on the
 swerd
 That wolde percen thurgh-out every-
 thing;
 And fille in speche of Thelophus the
 king,
 And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
 For he coude with it bothe hele and l
 dere, 240
 Right in swich wyse as men may with
 the swerd
 Of which right now ye han your-selven
 herd.
 They speken of sondry harding of metal,
 And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,
 And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded
 be; 245
 Which is unknowe algates unto me.
 Tho speke they of Canaceës ring,
 And seyden alle, that swich a wonder
 thing
 Of craft of ringes herde they never non,
 Save that he, Moyses, and king Salo-
 mon 250
 Hadde a name of konning in swich art.
 Thus seyn the peple, and drawn hem
 apart.
 But natheles, somme seyden that it was
 Wonder to maken of fern-asshen glas,
 And yet nis glas nat lyk asshen of
 fern; 255
 But for they han y-knowen it so fern,
 Therefore cesseth her Iangling and her
 wonder.
 As sore wondren somme on cause of
 thonder,
 On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on
 mist,
 And alle thing, til that the cause is
 wist. 260
 Thus Iangle they and demen and devyse,
 Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.
 Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,
 And yet ascending was the beest royal,
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldiaan 265
 Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambin-
 skan,
 Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful
 hye.
 To forn him gooth the loude minstralcye,

Til he cam to his chambre of parements,
 Ther as they sownen diverse instruments,
 That it is lyk an heven for to here. 271
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,
 For in the Fish hir lady sat ful hie,
 And loketh on hem with a freendly yē.

This noble king is set up in his
 throne. 275

This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,
 And on the daunce he gooth with Cana-
 ce.

Heer is the revel and the Iolitee
 That is nat able a dul man to devyse.

He moste han knowen love and his ser-
 vyse, 280

And been a festlich man as fresh as May,
 That sholde yow devyisen swich array.

Who coude telle yow the forme of
 daunces,

So uncouth and so fresshe contenaunces,
 Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges 285
 For drede of Ialouse mennes aperceyv-
 inges?

No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.

Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed;

I seye na-more, but in this Iolynesse

I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse. 290

The styward bit the spyces for to hie,
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.

The usshers and the squyers ben y-goon;

The spyces and the wyn is come anon.

They ete and drinke; and whan this
 hadde an ende, 295

Un-to the temple, as reson was, they
 wende.

The service doon, they soupen al by
 day.

What nedeth yow rehercen hir array?

Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste
 Hath plentee, to the moste and to the
 leeste. 300

And deyntees mo than been in my know-
 ing.

At-after soper gooth this noble king
 To seen this hors of bras, with al the
 route

Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.

Swich wondring was ther on this hors
 of bras 305

That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,
 Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,

Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho.
 But fynally the king axeth this knight

The vertu of this courser and the might,
 And preyede him to telle his gover-
 naunce. 311

This hors anon bigan to trippe and
 daunce,

Whan that this knight leyde hand up-on
 his reyne,

And seyde, 'sir, ther is na-more to seyne,
 But, whan yow list to ryden any-
 where, 315

Ye moten trille a pin, stant in his ere,
 Which I shall telle yow bitwix vs two.

Ye mote nempne him to what place also
 Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.

And whan ye come ther as yow list
 abyde, 320

Bidde him descende, and trille another
 pin,

For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,
 And he wol down descende and doon
 your wille;

And in that place he wol abyde stille,
 Though al the world the contrarie hadde
 y-swore; 325

He shal nat thennes ben y-drawe ne
 y-bore.

Or, if yow liste bidde him thennes goon,
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanishe anon

Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
 And come agayn, be it by day or night, 330

When that yow list to clepen him ageyn
 In swich a gyse as I shal to yow sey

Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful sone.
 Ryde whan yow list, ther is na-more to
 done.'

Enformed whan the king was of that
 knight, 335

And hath conceyved in his wit aright
 The maner and the forme of al this thing,
 Thus glad and blythe, this noble doughty
 king

Repeireth to his revel as biforn.

The brydel is un-to the tour y-born, 340

And kept among his Iewels leve and dere.
 The hors vanished, I noot in what man-
 ere,

Out of hir sighte; ye gete na-more of me.
 But this I lete in lust and Iolitee

This Cambynskan his lordes festeynge,
 Til wel ny the day bigan to springe. 346

*Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars
 secunda.*

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,
Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken
kepe,

That muchel drink and labour wolde han
reste;

And with a galping mouth hem alle he
keste, 350

And seyde, 'it was tyme to lye adoun,
For blood was in his dominacioun;
Cherisheth blood, natures freend,' quod
he.

They thanken him galpinge, by two, by
three,

And every wight gan drawe him to his
reste, 355

As slepe hem bad; they toke it for the
beste.

Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me;
Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,
That causeth drem, of which ther nis no
charge. 359

They slepen til that it was pryme large,
The moste part, but it were Canacee;
She was ful mesurable, as wommen be.

For of hir fader hadde she take leve
To gon to reste, sone after it was eve;
Hir liste nat appalled for to be, 365

Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see;
And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne
awook.

For swich a Loye she in hir herte took
Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,
That twenty tyme she changed hir col-
our; 370

And in hir slepe, right for impressioun
Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.

Wherfore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,
She cleped on hir maistresse hir bisyde,
And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse. 375

These olde women that been gladly
wyse,

As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anon,
And seyde, 'madame, whider wil ye goon
Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste.'
'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste 380
No longer for to slepe, and walke aboute.'

Hir maistresse clepeth women a gret
route,

And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve;
Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,
As rody and bright as dooth the yonge
sonne, 385

That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne;

Noon hyer was he, what she reddy was;
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
Lightly, for to pleye and walke on
fote; 390

Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee;
And in a trench, forth in the park, goth
she.

The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood,
Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;
But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte 395
That it made alle hir hertes for to lighte,
What for the seson and the morweninge,
And for the foules that she herde singe;
For right anon she wiste what they mente
Right by hir song, and knew al hir en-
tente. 400

The knotte, why that every tale is told,
If it be taried til that lust be cold
Of hem that han it after herked yore,
The savour passeth ever lenger the more,
For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee. 405

And by the same reson thinketh me,
I sholde to the knotte condescende,
And maken of hir walking sone an ende.

Amidde a tree fordrye, as whyt as chalk,
As Canacee was pleying in hir walk, 410
Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
That all the wode resounded of hir cry.

Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously
With bothe hir winges, til the rede
blood 415

Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.
And ever in oon she cryde alway and
shrighte,

And with hir beek hir-selven so she
prighte,
That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel
beste,

That dwelleth either in wode or in
foreste 420

That nolde han wept, if that he wepe
coude,

For sorwe of hir, she shrighte alway so
loude.

For ther nas never yet no man on lyve —
If that I coude a faucon wel discryve —
That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
As wel of plumage as of gentillesse 426
Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened
be.

A faucon peregryn than semed she

Of fremde land; and evermore, as she
stood,

She swowneth now and now for lakke of
blood, 430

Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,
That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,
Thurgh which she understood wel every
thing

That any foul may in his ledene seyn, 435
And coude answer him in his ledene
ageyn,

Hath understonde what this faucon
seyde,

And wel neigh for the rewthe almost
she deyde.

And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,
And on this faucon loketh pitously, 440

And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel
she wiste

The faucon moste fallen fro the twiste,
When that it swowned next, for lakke of
blood.

A longe while to wayten hir she stood
Till atte laste she spak in this manere 445

Un-to the hawk, as ye shul after here.

'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,
That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?'

Quod Canacee un-to this hawk above.

'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of
love? 450

For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two

That causen moost a gentil herte wo;

Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.

For ye your-self upon your-self yow
wreke,

Which proveth wel, that either love or
drede 455

Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,
Sin that I see non other wight yow
chace.

For love of god, as dooth your-selven
grace

Or what may ben your help; for west
nor eest 459

Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest
That ferde with him-self so pitously.

Ye slee me with your sorwe, verraily;
I have of yow so gret compassioun.

For goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;
And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe, 465

If that I verraily the cause knewe
Of your disese, if it lay in my micht,

I wolde amende it, er that it were night,
As wisly helpe me gret god of kinde!

And herbes shal I right y-nowe y-finde
To hele with your hurtes hastily.' 471

Tho shrighthe this faucon more pitously
Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde
anoon,

And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a
stoon,

Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take 475
Un-to the tyme she gan of swough
awake.

And, after that she of hir swough gan
breyde,

Right in hir haukes ledene thus she
seyde: —

'That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte,
Feling his similitude in peynes smerte,

Is preved al-day, as men may it see, 481
As wel by werk as by auctoritee;

For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse.
I see wel, that ye han of my distresse

Compassioun, my faire Canacee, 485
Of verray wommanly benignitee

That nature in your principles hath set.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,

But for to obeye un-to your herte free,
And for to maken other be war by me, 490

As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,
Right for that cause and that coun-
sioun,

Whyl that I have a leyser and a space,
Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace.'

And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,
That other weep, as she to water wolde,

Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille;
And, with a syk, right thus she seyde

hir wille.
'Ther I was bred (allas! that harde
day!) 499

And fostred in a roche of marbul gray
So tendrely, that nothing eyed me,

I niste nat what was adversitee,
Til I coude flee ful hye under the sky.

Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,
That semed welle of alle gentillesse; 505

Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
It was so wrapped under humble chere,

And under hewe of trouthe in swich
manere,

Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
That no wight coude han wend he coude

feyne, 510

So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.
 Right as a serpent hit him under floures
 Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,
 Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,
 Doth so his cerimonies and obeisaunces,
 And kepeth in semblant alle his obser-
 vances 516

Than sowneth in-to gentillesse of love.
 As in a tounge is al the faire above,
 And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,
 Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and
 hoot, 520

And in this wyse he served his entente,
 That (save the feend) non wiste what he
 mente.

Til he so longe had wopen and com-
 pleyned,
 And many a yeer his service to me
 feyned,

Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce,
 Al innocent of his crowned malice, 526
 For-fered of his deeth, as thoughte me,
 Upon his othes and his seuretee,
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,
 That evermore myn honour and renoun
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert; 531
 This is to seyn, that, after his desert,
 I yaf him al myn herte and al my
 thought—

God woot and he, that otherwyse
 nought—

And took his herte in change for myn
 for ay. 535

But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many a
 day,

“A trew wight and a thief thenken nat
 oon.”

And, whan he saugh the thing so fer
 y-gooun,

That I had graunted him fully my love,
 In swich a gyse as I have seyde above, 540

And yeven him my trewe herte, as free
 As he swoor he his herte yaf to me;

Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,
 Fil on his knees with so devout hum-
 blesse,

With so heigh reverence, and, as by his
 chere, 545

So lyk a gentil lovere of manere,
 So ravished, as it semed, for the Ioye,
 That never Iason, ne Parys of Troye,
 Iason? certes, ne non other man,
 Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan 550

To loven two, as writen folk biforn,
 Ne never, sin the firste man was born,
 Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,
 Countrefete the sophimes of his art;
 Ne were worthy unbokete his galoche, 555
 Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde ap-
 proche,

Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me!
 His maner was an heven for to see

Til any womman, were she never so wys;
 So peynted he and kembde at point-devys

As wel his wordes as his contenance. 561
 And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,
 And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,

That, if so were that any thing him
 smerte, 564

Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,
 Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte

twiste.

And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
 That my wil was his willes instrument;

This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil
 In alle thing, as fer as reson fil, 570

Keping the boundes of my worship ever.
 Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,

As him, god woot! ne never shal na-mo.

This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,
 That I supposed of him nought but good.

But fynally, thus atte laste it stood, 576
 That fortune wolde that he moste twinne
 Out of that place which that I was inne.

Wher me was wo, that is no questioun;
 I can nat make of it discripcioun; 580

For o thing dar I tellen boldely,
 I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-

by;

Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bi-
 leve.

So on a day of me he took his leve, 584
 So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly

That he had felt as muche harm as I,
 Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh
 his hewe.

But natheles, I thoughte he was so
 trewe,

And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
 With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn;

And reson wolde eek that he moste go 590
 For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,

That I made vertu of necessitee,
 And took it wel, sin that it moste be.

As I best mighte, I hidde fro him m
 sorwe, 59

And took him by the hond, seint Iohn to
 borwe,
 And seyde him thus: "lo, I am youres
 al;
 Beth swich as I to yow have been, and
 shal."
 What he answerde, it nedeth nocht re-
 herce,
 Who can sey bet than he, who can do
 werse? 600
 Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath
 he doon.
 "Therefor bihoveth him a ful long spoon
 That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I
 seye.
 So atte laste he moste forth his weye,
 And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him
 leste. 605
 Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,
 I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,
 That "alle thing, repeiring to his kinde,
 Gladeth him-self"; thus seyn men, as I
 gesse;
 Men loven of propre kinde newfangel-
 nesse, 610
 As briddes doon that men in cages fede.
 For though thou night and day take of
 hem hede,
 And strawe hir cage faire and softe as
 silk,
 And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and
 milk, 614
 Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his
 cuppe,
 And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;
 So newfangel been they of hir mete,
 And loven novelryes of propre kinde;
 No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem
 binde. 620
 So ferde this tercelet, allas the day!
 Though he were gentil born, and fresh
 and gay,
 And goodly for to seen, and humble and
 free,
 He saugh up-on a tyme a kyte flee,
 And soleyntyly he loved this kyte so, 625
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse;
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hir seryse,
 And I am lorn with-outen remedye!
 And with that word this faucon gan to
 crye, 630

And swowned eft in Canaceës barme.
 Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes
 harme,
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen
 made;
 They niste how they mighte the faucon
 glade. 634
 But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe,
 And softly in plastres gan hir wrappe,
 Ther as she with hir beek had hurt hir-
 selve.
 Now can nat Canacee but herbes delve
 Out of the grounde, and make salves
 newe 639
 Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe,
 To helen with this hawk; fro day to
 night
 She dooth hir businesse and al hir might.
 And by hir beddes heed she made a
 mewe,
 And covered it with veluëttes blewe,
 In signe of trouthe that is in wommen
 sene. 645
 And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted
 grene,
 In which were peynted alle these false
 foules,
 As beth these tidifs, tercelets, and oules,
 Right for despyt were peynted hem
 bisyde, 649
 And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde.
 Thus lete I Canacee hir hawk keping;
 I wol na-more as now speke of hir ring,
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
 How that this faucon gat hir love ageyn
 Repentant, as the storie telleth us, 655
 By mediacioun of Cambalus,
 The kinges sone, of whiche I yow tolde.
 But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde
 To speke of adventures and of batailles,
 That never yet was herd so grete mer-
 vailles. 660
 First wol I telle yow of Cambinskan,
 That in his tyme many a citee wan;
 And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,
 How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,
 For whom ful ofte in greet peril he
 was, 665
 Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of
 bras;
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
 That faught in listes with the bretheren
 two

For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne.
And ther I lefte I wol ageyn biginne. 670

*Explicit secunda pars. Incipit pars
tercia.*

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye,
Til that the god Mercurius hous the
slye —

* * * * *

*Here folowen the wordes of the Frankelin
to the Squier, and the wordes of the
Host to the Frankelin.*

‘In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel
y-quit,

And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,
Quod the Frankeleyn, ‘considering thy
youth, 675

So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow
the!

As to my doom, there is non that is here.
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
If that thou live; god yeve thee good
chaunce, 679

And in vertu sende thee continuance!
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.
I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee,

I hadde lever than twenty pound worth
lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn
hond,

[*The Frankleyn’s Prologue follows immediately.*]

He were a man of swich discrecioun 685
As that ye been! fy on possessioun
But-if a man be vertuous with-al.

I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
For he to vertu listeth nat entende;
But for to pleye at dees, and to de-
spende, 690

And lese al that he hath, is his usage.
And he hath lever talken with a page
Than to comune with any gentil wight
Ther he mighte lerne gentillesse aright.’

‘Straw for your gentillesse,’ quod our
host; 695

‘What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel
thou wost

That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste
A tale or two, or breken his biheste.’

‘That knowe I wel, sir,’ quod the
frankeleyn;

‘I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn
Though to this man I speke a word or
two.’ 701

‘Telle on thy tale with-uten wordes
mo.’

‘Gladly, sir host,’ quod he, ‘I wol
obeye

Un-to your wil; now herkneth what I
seye.

I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse 705
As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;

I prey to god that it may plesen yow,
Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.’

THE FRANKLIN’S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale.

THISE olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes, 710

Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge;
Which layes with hir instruments they
songe,

Or elles reddden hem for hir plesaunce;
And oon of hem have I in remem-
braunce,

Which I shal seyn with good wil as I
can. 715

But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,
At my biginning first I yow biseche

Have me excused of my rude speche;
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn;
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and
pleyn. 720

I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero.

Colours ne knowe I none, with-uten
drede,

But swiche colours as growen in the
mede,

Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte. 725
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;

My spirit feleth noght of swich matere.
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here.

THE FRANKELEYNS TALE.

Here biginneth the Frankeleyns Tale.

IN Armorik, that called is Britayne,
 Ther was a knight that loved and dide his
 payne 730
 To serve a lady in his beste wyse;
 And many a labour, many a greet em-
 pryse
 He for his lady wroghte, er she were
 wonne.
 For she was oon, the faireste under
 sonne,
 And eek therto come of so heigh kin-
 rede, 735
 That wol unnetthes dorste this knight, for
 drede,
 Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his dis-
 tresse.
 But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse,
 And namely for his meke obeysaunce,
 Hath swich a pitee caught of his pen-
 aunce, 740
 That prively she fil of his accord
 To take him for hir housbonde and hir
 lord,
 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir
 wyves;
 And for to lede the more in blisse hir
 lyves,
 Of his free wil he swoor hir as a
 knight, 745
 That never in al his lyf he, day ne night,
 Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye
 Agayn hir wil, ne kythe hir Ialouslye,
 But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al
 As any love to his lady shal; 750
 Save that the name of soveraynetee,
 That wolde he have for shame of his de-
 gree.
 She thanked him, and with ful greet
 humblesse
 She seyde, 'sire, sith of your gentillesse
 Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, 755
 Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,
 As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.
 Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf,
 Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte
 breste.'

Thus been they bothe in quiete and in
 reste. 760

For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,
 That frendes everich other moot obeye,
 If they wol longe holden companye.
 Love wol nat ben constreyned by mais-
 trye;

Whan maistrie comth, the god of love
 anon 765
 Beteth hise winges, and farewell! he is
 gon!

Love is a thing as any spirit free;
 Wommen of kinde desiren liberte,
 And nat to ben constreyned as a thral;
 And so don men, if I soth seyen shal. 770
 Loke who that is most pacient in love,
 He is at his avantage al above.

Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn;
 For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,
 Things that rigour sholde never att-
 teyne. 775

For every word men may nat chyde or
 pleyne.

Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I
 goon,

Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or
 noon.

For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,
 That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme
 amis. 780

Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,
 Wyn, wo, or chaungeinge of complexioun
 Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken.
 On every wrong a man may nat be wroken;
 After the tyme, moste be temperaunce 785
 To every wight that can on governaunce.

And therefore hath this wyse worthy knight,
 To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight,
 And she to him ful wisly gan to swere
 That never sholde ther be defaute in
 here. 790

Heer may men seen an humble wys
 accord;

Thus hath she take hir servant and hir
 lord,

Servant in love, and lord in mariage;
 Than was he bothe in lordship and ser-
 vage;

Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,
 Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
 His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
 The which that lawe of love acordeth to.
 And when he was in this prosperitee,
 Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his con-
 tree, 800
 Nat fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling
 was,

Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas.
 Who coude telle, but he had wedded
 be,

The Ioye, the ese, and the prosperitee
 That is bitwixe an housbonde and his
 wyf? 805

A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,
 Til that the knight of which I speke of
 thus,

That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,
 Shoop him to goon, and dwelle a yeer or
 tweyne

In Engelond, that cleped was eek Brit-
 eyne, 810

To seke in armes worship and honour;
 For al his lust he sette in swich labour;
 And dwelled ther two yeer, the book
 seith thus.

Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,
 And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
 That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes
 lyf. 816

For his absence wepeth she and syketh,
 As doon thise noble wyves whan hem
 lyketh.

She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth,
 pleyneth;

Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth,
 That al this wyde world she sette at
 noght. 821

Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hev-
 thoght,

Conforten hir in al that ever they may;
 They prechen hir, they telle hir night
 and day, 824

That causeless she sleeth hir-self, allas!
 And every confort possible in this cas
 They doon to hir with al hir businesse,
 Al for to make hir leve hir hevnesse.

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,
 Men may so longe graven in a stoon, 830
 Til som figure ther-inne emprented be.
 So longe han they comforted hir, til she
 Reccyved hath, by hope and by resoun,

The emprenting of hir consolacioun,
 Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan
 aswage; 835

She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.
 And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
 Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his wel-
 fare,

And that he wol come hastily agayn;
 Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.
 Hir frendes sawe hir sorwe gan to
 slake, 841

And preyede hir on knees, for goddes
 sake,

To come and romen hir in companye,
 Awey to dryve hir derke fantasye.
 And finally, she graunted that requeste;
 For wel she saugh that it was for the
 beste. 846

Now stood hir castel faste by the see,
 And often with hir frendes walketh she
 Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,

Wher-as she many a ship and barge
 seigh 850

Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go;
 But than was that a parcel of hir wo.

For to hir-self ful ofte 'allas!' seith she,
 'Is ther no ship, of so manye as I see,
 Wol bringen hom my lord? than were
 myn herte 855

Al warissed of his bittre peynes smerte.'
 Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and
 thinke,

And caste hir eyen downward fro the
 brinke.

But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes
 blake,

For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake,
 That on hir feet she mighte hir noght
 sustene. 861

Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the
 grene,

And pitously in-to the see biholde,
 And seyn right thus, with sorweful sykes
 colde:

'Eterne god, that thurgh thy purvey-
 aunce 865

Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
 In ydel, as men seyn, ye no-thing make;
 But, lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes
 blake,

That semen rather a foul confusioun
 Of werk than any fair creacioun 870
 Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,

Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
 For by this werk, south, north, ne west,
 ne eest,
 Ther nis y-fostred man, ne brid, ne beest;
 It dooth no good, to my wit, but any-
 eth. 875
 See ye nat, lord, how mankinde it de-
 stroyeth?
 An hundred thousand bodies of man-
 kinde
 Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in
 minde,
 Which mankinde is so fair part of thy
 werk
 That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene
 merk. 880
 Than semed it ye hadde a grect chiertee
 Toward mankinde; but how than may
 it be
 That ye swiche menes make it to de-
 stroyen,
 Whiche menes do no good, but ever
 anyoen?
 I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem
 leste, 885
 By arguments, that al is for the beste,
 Tho I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.
 But thilke god, that made wind to blowe,
 As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;
 To clerkes lete I al disputisoun. 890
 But wolde god that alle these rokkes
 blake
 Were sonken in-to helle for his sake!
 These rokkes sleen myn herte for the
 fere.
 Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous
 tere.
 Hir freendes sawe that it was no dis-
 port 895
 To romen by the see, but discomfort;
 And shopen for to pleyen somwher
 elles.
 They leden hir by riveres and by welles,
 And eek in othere places delitable;
 They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches
 and tables. 900
 So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,
 Un-to a gardin that was ther bisyde,
 In which that they had maad hir ordi-
 naunce
 Of vaille and of other purveyaunce,

They goon and pleye hem al the longe
 day. 905
 And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
 Which May had peynted with his softe
 shoures
 This gardin ful of leves and of floures;
 And craft of mannes hand so curiously
 Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely, 910
 That never was ther gardin of swich
 prys,
 But-if it were the verray paradys.
 The odour of floures and the fresshe
 sighte
 Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte
 That ever was born, but-if to gret sik-
 nesse, 915
 Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse;
 So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
 At-after diner gonne they to daunce,
 And singe also, save Dorigen allone,
 Which made alwey hir compleint and hir
 mone; 920
 For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,
 That was hir housbonde and hir love
 also.
 But natheles she moste a tyme abyde,
 And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.
 Up-on this daunce, amonges othere
 men, 925
 Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,
 That fressher was and Iolyer of array,
 As to my doom, than is the monthe of
 May.
 He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man
 That is, or was, sith that the world
 bigan. 930
 Ther-with he was, if men sholde him
 discryve,
 Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve;
 Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche
 and wys,
 And wel biloved, and holden in gret
 prys.
 And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
 Unwiting of this Dorigen at al, 936
 This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,
 Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,
 Had loved hir best of any creature
 Two yeer and more, as was his aventure,
 But never dorste he telle hir his grev-
 aunce; 941
 With-outhe coppe he drank al his pen-
 aunce.

He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he
seye,
Save in his songes somwhat wolde he
wreye
His wo, as in a general compleyning; 945
He seyde he lovede, and was biloved
no-thing.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But languissheth, as a furie dooth in
helle; 950
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide
Ekko
For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir
wo.
In other manere than ye here me seye,
Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye;
Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at
daunces, 955
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,
It may wel be he loked on hir face
In swich a wyse, as man that asketh
grace;
But no-thing wiste she of his entente.
Nathelees, it happed, er they thennes
wente, 960
By-cause that he was hir neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And hadde y-knowen him of tyme yore,
They fille in speche; and forth more and
more
Un-to his purpos drough Aurelius, 965
And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde
thus:
'Madame,' quod he, 'by god that this
world made,
So that I wiste it mighte your herte
glade,
I wolde, that day that your Arveragus
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius, 970
Had went ther never I sholde have come
agayn;
For wel I woot my service is in vayn.
My guerdon is but bresting of myn
herte;
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;
For with a word ye may me sleen or
save, 975
Heer at your feet god wolde that I were
grave!
I ne have as now no leyser more to
seye;

Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me
deye!'
She gan to loke up-on Aurelius:
'Is this your wil,' quod she, 'and sey ye
thus? 980
Never erst,' quod she, 'ne wiste I what
ye mente.
But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,
By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne shal I never been untrewed wyf
In word ne werk, as fer as I have
wit: 985
I wol ben his to whom that I am knit;
Tak this for fynal answer as of me.'
But after that in pley thus seyde she:
'Aurelie,' quod she, 'by heighe god
above,
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been your
love, 990
Sin I yow see so pitously complayne;
Loke what day that, endelong Britayne,
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon —
I seye, whan ye han maad the coast so
clene 995
Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,
Than wol I love yow best of any man;
Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I
can.'
'Is ther non other grace in yow,' quod
he.
'No, by that lord,' quod she, 'that
maked me! 1000
For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.
Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.
What deyntee sholde a man han in his
lyf
For to go love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan so that him
lyketh?' 1005
Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh;
Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus
answerde:
'Madame,' quod he, 'this were an
impossible!
Than moot I dye of sodein deth hor-
rible.' 1010
And with that word he turned him anon.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and down,
And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeinly bigonne revel newe 1015

Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;
For thorisonte hath rest the sonne his
light;

This is as muche to seye as it was
night.

And hoom they goon in Ioye and in
solas,

Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas! 1020
He to his hous is goon with sorweful
herte;

He seeth he may nat fro his deeth
asterte.

Him semed that he felte his herte colde;
Up to the hevене his handes he gan
holde,

And on his knowes bare he sette him
doun, 1025

And in his raving seyde his orisoun.

For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.
He niste what he spak, but thus he
seyde;

With pitous herte his pleynt hath he
bigonne

Un-to the goddess, and first un-to the
sonne: 1030

He seyde, 'Appollo, god and governour

Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,
That yevest, after thy declinacioun,
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or
hye, 1035

Lord Phebus, cast thy merciabie yē
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but
lorn.

Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn
With-oute gilt, but thy benignitee

Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow
lest, 1041

Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.
Now voucheth sauf that I may yow
devyse

How that I may been holpe and in what
wyse.

Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and
quene, 1046

Though Neptunus have deitee in the
see,

Yet emperesse aboven him is she:
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir
desyr

Is to be quiked and lightned of your
fyr, 1050

For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desyareth naturelly
To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and riveres more and
lesse.

Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my re-
queste — 1055

Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste —
That now, next at this opposicioun,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,
As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
That fyve fadme at the leeste it over-
springe 1060

The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne;
Than certes to my lady may I seye:

"Holdeth your heste, the rokkes been
aweye."

Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for
me; 1065

Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye;
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye these yeres two.

Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
And spring-flood laste bothe night and
day. 1070

And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche
manere

To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,
Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun
In-to hir owene derke regioun

Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth
inne, 1075

Or never-mo shal I my lady winne.
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot
seke;

Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke,
And of my peyne have som compas-
sioun.'

And with that word in swowne he fil
adoun, 1080

And longe tyme he lay forth in a
traunce.

His brother, which that knew of his
penaunce,

Up caughte him and to bedde he hath
him broght.

Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght
Lete I this woful creature lye; 1085

Chese he for me, whether he wol live or
dye.

Arveragus, with hele and greet honour,
 As he that was of chivalrye the flour,
 Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.
 O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen, 1090
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne
 armes,
 The fresshe knight, the worthy man of
 armes,
 That loveth thee, as his owene hertes
 lyf.
 No-thing list him to been imaginatyf
 If any wight had spoke, whyl he was
 oute, 1095
 To hire of love; he hadde of it no
 doute.
 He noght entendeth to no swich matere,
 But daunceth, Iusteth, maketh hir good
 chere;
 And thus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem
 dwelle, 1099
 And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle.
 In langour and in torment furious
 Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
 Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon;
 Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,
 Save of his brother, which that was a
 clerk; 1105
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk.
 For to non other creature certeyn
 Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.
 Under his brest he bar it more secree
 Than ever dide Pamphilus for Galathee.
 His brest was hool, with-oute for to sene,
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,
 But men mighte touche the arwe, or
 come therby. 1115
 His brother weep and wayled prively,
 Til atte laste him fil in remembrance,
 That whyl he was at Orliens in Fraunce,
 As yonge clerkes, that been likerous
 To reden artes that been curious, 1120
 Seken in every halke and every herne
 Particuler sciences for to lerne,
 He him remembred that, upon a day,
 At Orliens in studie a book he say
 Of magik naturel, which his felawe, 1125
 That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,
 Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
 Had prively upon his desk y-laft;
 Which book spak muchel of the opera-
 ciouns,

Touchinge the eighte and twenty man-
 siouns 1130
 That longen to the mone, and swich
 folye,
 As in our dayes is nat worth a flye;
 For holy chirches feith in our bileve
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
 And whan this book was in his remem-
 braunce, 1135
 Anon for Ioye his herte gan to daunce,
 And to him-self he seyde prively:
 'My brother shal be warissed hastily;
 For I am siker that ther be sciences, 1139
 By whiche men make diverse apparences
 Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures pleye.
 For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,
 That tregetours, with-inne an halle large,
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,
 And in the halle rowen up and down.
 Somtyme hath semed come a grim
 leoun; 1146
 And somtyme floures springe as in a
 mede;
 Somtyme a vync, and grapes whyte and
 rede;
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;
 And whan hem lyked, voyded it anoon.
 Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.
 Now than conclude I thus, that if I
 mighte 1152
 At Orliens som old felawe y-finde,
 That hadde this mones mansions in
 minde,
 Or other magik naturel above, 1155
 He sholde wel make my brother han his
 love.
 For with an apparence a clerk may
 make
 To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes
 bliake
 Of Britaigne weren y-voyled everichon,
 And shippes by the brinke comen and
 gon, 1160
 And in swich forme endure a day or
 two;
 Than were my brother warissed of his
 wo.
 Than moste she nedes holden hir biheste,
 Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste.'
 What sholde I make a lenger tale of
 this? 1165
 Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,
 And swich confort he yaf him for to gon

To Orliens, that he up stirte anon,
And on his wey forthward thanne is he
fare,

In hope for to been lissed of his care.

Whan they were come almost to that
citee. 1171

But-if it were a two furlong or three,
A yong clerk rominge by him-self they
mette,

Which that in Latin thriftily hem grette,
And after that he seyde a wonder thing:
'I knowe,' quod he, 'the cause of your
coming?'; 1176

And er they ferther any fote wente,
He tolde hem al that was in hir entente.

This Briton clerk him asked of felawes
The whiche that he had knowe in olde
dawes; 1180

And he answerde him that they dede
were,

For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte
anon,

And forth with this magicien is he gon
Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at
ese. 1185

Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem
plese;

So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon.

He shewed him, er he wente to sopeer,
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer; 1190
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes

hye,
The gretteste that ever were seyn with
yë.

He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with
houndes,

And somme with arwes blede of bittre
woundes.

He saugh, whan voided were these wilde
deer, 1195

These fauconers upon a fair river,
That with hir haukes han the heron
slayn.

Tho saugh he knightes Iusting in a
playn;

And after this, he dide him swich ple-
saunce,

That he him shewed his lady on a
daunce 1200

On which him-self he daunced, as him
thoughte.

And whan this maister, that this magik
wroughte,
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes
two,

And farewell! al our revel was ago.

And yet remoeved they never out of the
hous, 1205

Why! they saugh al this sighte merveil-
lous,

But in his studie, ther-as his bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they
three.

To him this maister called his squyer,
And seyde him thus: 'is redy our
soper? 1210

Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,
Whan that these worthy men wenten
with me

In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'

'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'whan it lyketh
yow, 1215

It is al redy, though ye wol right now.'
'Go we than soupe,' quod he, 'as for the
beste;

This amorous folk som-tyme mote han
reste.'

At-after soper fille they in trettee,

What somme sholde this maistres guer-
don be, 1220

To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of
Sayne.

He made it straunge, and swoor, so
god him save,

Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde
nat have,

Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat
goon. 1225

Aurelius, with blisful herte anon,

Answerde thus, 'fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men seye is
round,

I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.

This bargayn is ful drive, for we ben
knit. 1230

Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But loketh now, for no necligence or
slouthe,

Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to-
morwe.'

'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have heer my
feith to borwe.'

To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him
leste, 1235
And wel ny al that night he hadde his
reste;

What for his labour and his hope of
blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a
lisse.

Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne toke they the righte way,
Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde, 1241
And been descended ther they wolde
abyde;

And this was, as the bokes me remembre,
The colde frosty seson of Decembre.

Phebus wex old, and hewed lyk latoun,
That in his hote declinacioun 1246
Shoon as the burned gold with stremes
bryghte;

But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel
seyn. 1249

The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Ianus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn.
Biforn him stant braun of the tusked
swyn,

And "Nowel" cryeth every lusty man.
Aurelius, in al that ever he can, 1256

Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
And preyeth him to doon his diligence
To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his
herte. 1260

This subtil clerk swich routhe had of
this man,
That night and day he spedde him that
he can,

To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;
This is to seye, to make illusioun,
By swich an apparence or Iogelrye, 1265
I ne can no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene
and seye,

That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
Or elles they were sonken under grounde.
So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde
To maken his Iapes and his wrecched-
nesse 1271

Of swich a superstitious cursednesse.
His tables Toletanes forth he broght,
Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noght,

Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,
Ne his rotes ne his othere geres, 1276
As been his centres and his arguments,
And his proporcionels convenients
For his equacions in every thing.
And, by his eighte spere in his wirking,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was
shove 1281

Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above
That in the ninthe speere considered is;
Ful subtilly he calculated al this.

Whan he had founde his firste man-
sioun, 1285
He knew the remenant by proporcoun;
And knew the arysing of his mone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every-
deel;

And knew ful weel the mones mansioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun, 1290
And knew also his othere observaunces
For swiche illusiouns and swiche mes-
chaunces

As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;
For which no lenger maketh he delayes,
But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or
tweye, 1295
It semed that alle the rokkes were
aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amis,
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon
obstacle, 1300

That voided were these rokkes everichon,
Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,
And seyde, 'I woful wrecche, Aurelius,
Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde :'
And to the temple his wey forth hath he
holde, 1306

Wher-as he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his time, anon-right
he,
With dredful herte and with ful humble
chere,

Saledwed hath his sovereyn lady dere :
'My righte lady,' quod this woful
man, 1311
'Whom I most drede and love as I best
can,

And lothest were of al this world dis-
plese,
Nere it that I for yow have swich dise.

That I moste dyen heer at your foot
 anon, 1315
 Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;
 But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne;
 Ye slee me giltelees for verray peyne.
 But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no
 routhe,
 Avyseth yow, er that ye breke your
 trouthe. 1320
 Repenteth yow, for thilke god above,
 Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love.
 For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han
 hight;
 Nat that I chalange any thing of right 1324
 Of yow my sovereyn lady, but your grace;
 But in a gardin yond, at swich a place,
 Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
 And in myn hand your trouthe pligheten ye
 To love me best, god woot, ye seyde so,
 Al be that I unworthy be therto. 1330
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of
 yow,
 More than to save myn hertes lyf right
 now;
 I have do so as ye comanded me;
 And if ye vouche-sauf, ye may go see.
 Doth as yow list, have your biheste in
 minde, 1335
 For quik or deed, right ther ye shul me
 finde;
 In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye; —
 But wel I woot the rokkes been awaye!
 He taketh his leve, and she astonied
 stood,
 In al hir face nas a drope of blood; 1340
 She wende never han come in swich a
 trappe:
 'Alas!' quod she, 'that ever this sholde
 happe!
 For wende I never, by possibilitee,
 That swich a monstre or merveille mighte
 be!
 It is agayns the proces of nature': 1345
 And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.
 For verray fere unnethe may she go,
 She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,
 And swowneth, that it routhe was to
 see; 1349
 But why it was, to no wight tolde she;
 For out of toune was goon Arveragus.
 But to hir-self she spak, and seyde thus,
 With face pale and with ful sorweful chere,
 In hir compleynt, as ye shul alter here:

'Allas,' quod she, 'on thee, Fortune,
 I pleyne, 1355
 That unwar wrapped hast me in thy
 cheyne;
 For which, tescapen, woot I no socour
 Save only deeth or elles dishonour;
 Oon of these two bihoveth me to these.
 But nathelees, yet have I lever to lese 1360
 My lyf than of my body have a shame,
 Or knowe my-selven fals, or lese my name,
 And with my deth I may be quit, y-wis.
 Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,
 And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, allas!
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
 Yis, certes, lo, these stories beren wit-
 nesse;
 Whan thretty tyrants, ful of cursed-
 nesse,
 Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte
 feste, 1369
 They comanded his doghtres for taresten,
 And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt,
 Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delyt,
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem
 daunce
 Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mis-
 chaunce!
 For which these woful maydens, ful of
 drede, 1375
 Rather than they wolde lese hir mayden-
 hede,
 They prively ben stirt in-to a welle,
 And dreynete hem-selven, as the bokes
 telle.
 They of Messene lete enquire and
 seke
 Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke, 1380
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lech-
 erye;
 But was there noon of al that companye
 That she nas slayn, and with a good
 entente
 Chees rather for to dye than assente
 To been oppressed of hir mayden-
 hede. 1385
 Why sholde I thanne to dye been in
 drede?
 Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristocledes
 That loved a mayden, heet Stimphalides,
 Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,
 Un-to Dianes temple goth she right, 1390
 And hente the image in hir bandes two,
 Fro which image wolde she never go.

No wight ne mighte hir handes of it
arace,

Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
Now sith that maydens hadden swich
despyt 1395

To been defouled with mannes foul
delyt,

Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.

What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
That at Cartage birafte hir-self hir
lyf? 1400

For whan she saugh that Romayns wan
the toun,

She took hir children alle, and skipte
adoun

In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye
Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.

Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn hir-self,
allas! 1405

At Rome, whanne she oppressed was
Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a
shame

To liven whan she hadde lost hir name?
The sevene maydens of Milesie also

Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and
wo, 1410

Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde
opresse.

Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Coude I now telle as touchinge this
mater.

Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so
dere

Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to
glyde 1415

In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
And seyde, "my body, at the leeste way,
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may."

What sholde I no ensamples heer-of
sayn,

Sith that so manye han hem-selven
slayn 1420

Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?
I wol conclude, that it is bet for me

To sleen my-self, than been defouled
thus.

I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,
Or rather sleen my-self in som manere,

As dide Demociones doghter dere, 1426
By-cause that she wolde nat defouled be.

O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee,
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas!

That slowe hem-selven for swich maner
cas. 1430

As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,
The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore
Hir-selven slow, right for swich maner
wo.

Another Theban mayden dide right so;
For oon of Macedoine hadde hir op-
pressed, 1435

She with hir deeth hir maydenhede re-
dressed.

What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas birafte hir-self hir
lyf?

How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
His love, that rather for to dyen
chees 1440

Than for to suffre his body unburied be!
Lo which a wyf was Alceste,' quod she.

'What seith Omer of gode Penelopee?
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.

Pardee, of Laodomya is writen
thus, 1445

That whan at Troye was slayn Prothese-
laus,

No lenger wolde she live after his day.
The same of noble Porcia telle I

may;
With-oute Brutus coude she nat live,

To whom she hadde al hool hir herte
yive. 1450

The parfyt wyfhod of Arthemesyne
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.

O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee
To alle wyves may a mirour be.

The same thing I seye of Bilia, 1455
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.'

Thus playned Dorigene a day or tweye,
Purposing ever that she wolde deye.

But nathelees, upon the thridde night,
Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy

knight, 1460

And asked hir, why that she weep so
sore?

And she gan wepen ever lenger the
more.

'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever was I
born!

Thus have I seyde,' quod she, 'thus have
I sworn' —

And told him al as ye han herd bi-
fore; 1465

It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more.

This housbond with glad chere, in
 frendly wyse,
 Answerde and seyde as I shal yow de-
 vyse:
 'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'
 'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'god help me so,
 as wis; 1470
 This is to muche, and it were goddes
 wille.'
 'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'lat slepen that is
 stille;
 It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day.
 Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!
 For god so wisly have mercy on me, 1475
 I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,
 For verray love which that I to yow
 have,
 But-if ye sholde your trouthe kepe and
 save.
 Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may
 kepe': —
 But with that word he brast anon to
 wepe, 1480
 And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up peyne of
 death,
 That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne
 breeth,
 To no wight tel thou of this aventure.
 As I may best, I wol my wo endure,
 Ne make no contenance of hevi-
 nesse, 1485
 That folk of yow may demen harm or
 gesse.'
 And forth he cleped a squyer and a
 mayde:
 'Goth forth anon with Dorigen,' he
 sayde,
 'And bringeth hir to swich a place
 anon.'
 They take hir leve, and on hir way they
 gon; 1490
 But they ne wiste why she thider wente.
 He nolde no wight tellen his entente.
 Paraventure an heap of yow, y-wis,
 Wol holden him a lewed man in this,
 That he wol putte his wyf in lupar-
 ty; 1495
 Herkneþ the tale, er ye up-on hir crye.
 She may have bettre fortune than yow
 semeth;
 And whan that ye han herd the tale,
 demeth.
 This squyer, which that highte Aurelius,

On Dorigen that was so amorous, 1500
 Of aventure happed hir to mete
 Amidde the toun, right in the quikkest
 strete,
 As she was boun to goon the wey forth-
 right
 Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.
 And he was to the gardinward also; 1505
 For wel he spyed, whan she wolde go
 Out of hir hous to any maner place.
 But thus they mette, of aventure or
 grace;
 And he sawleth hir with glad entente,
 And asked of hir whiderward she
 wente? 1510
 And she answerde, half as she were
 mad,
 'Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,
 My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!'
 Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
 And in his herte had greet compassioun
 Of hir and of hir lamentacioun, 1516
 And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,
 That bad hir holden al that she had
 hight,
 So looth him was his wyf sholde breke
 hir trouthe;
 And in his herte he caughte of this greet
 routhe, 1520
 Consideringe the beste on every syde,
 That fro his lust yet were him lever
 abyde
 Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecched-
 nesse
 Agayns franchyse and alle gentillesse;
 For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:
 'Madame, seyth to your lord Arvera-
 gus, 1526
 That sith I see his grete gentillesse
 To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse,
 That him were lever han shame (and
 that were routhe)
 Than ye to me sholde breke thus your
 trouthe, 1530
 I have wel lever ever to suffre wo
 Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.
 I yow relese, madame, in-to your hond
 Quit every surement and every bond,
 That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn,
 Sith thilke tyme which that ye were
 born. 1536
 My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never
 repreve

Of no biheste, and here I take my leve,
 As of the treweste and the beste wyf
 That ever yet I knew in al my lyf. 1540
 But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,
 On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,
 As well as can a knight, with-outen
 drede.'

She thinketh him up-on hir knees al
 bare, 1545
 And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare,
 And tolde him al as ye han herd me
 sayd;

And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd,
 That it were impossible me to wryte;
 What sholde I lenger of this 'cas endyte?

Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf 1551
 In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.
 Never eft ne was ther angre hem bi-
 twene;

He cherisseth hir as though she were a
 quene; 1554

And she was to him trewe for evermore.
 Of this two folk ye gete of me na-more.

Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,
 Curseth the tyme that ever he was born:
 'Allas,' quod he, 'allas! that I bihighte
 Of pured gold a thousand pound of
 wighte 1560

Un-to this philosophre! how shal I do?
 I see na-more but that I am fordo.

Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,
 And been a begger; heer may I nat
 dwelle,

And shamen al my kinrede in this
 place, 1565

But I of him may gete bettre grace.
 But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,

At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye,
 And thanke him of his grete curteisye;
 My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.'

With herte soor he gooth un-to his
 cofre, 1571

And broghte gold un-to this philosophre,
 The value of fyve hundred pound, I
 gesse,

And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse,
 To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,
 And seyde, 'maister, I dar wel make
 avaut, 1576

I failed never of my trouthe as yit;
 For sikerly my dette shal be quit
 Towardes yow, how-ever that I fare

To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare. 1580
 But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurtee,
 Two yeer or three for to respyten me,
 Than were I wel; for elles moot I selle
 Myn heritage; ther is na-more to telle.'

This philosophre sobrely answerde,
 And seyde thus, whan he these wordes
 herde: 1586

'Have I nat holden covenant un-to
 thee?'

'Yes, certes, wel and trewely,' quod he.
 'Hastow nat had thy lady as thee
 lyketh?'

'No, no,' quod he, and sorwefully he
 syketh. 1590

'What was the cause? tel me if thou
 can.'

Aurelius his tale anon bigan,
 And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore;
 It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more.

He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse,
 Had lever dye in sorwe and in dis-
 tresse 1596

Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe
 fals.'

The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him
 al,

How looth hir was to been a wikked
 wyf,

And that she lever had lost that day hir
 lyf, 1600

And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh
 innocence:

'She never erst herde speke of appar-
 ence;

That made me han of hir so greet pitee.
 And right as frely as he sente hir me,

As frely sente I hir to him ageyn. 1605
 This al and som, 'ther is na-more to
 seyn.'

This philosophre answerde, 'leve
 brother,

Everich of yow dide gentilly til other.
 Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight;

But god forbede, for his blisful might, 1610
 But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede
 As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!

Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound,
 As thou right now were copen out of
 the ground,

Ne never er now ne haddest knowen
 me. 1615

For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee

For al my craft, ne noght for my tra-
vaile.

Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitaille;
It is y-nogh, and farewel, have good day : '
And tooke his hors, and forth he gooth
his way. 1620

Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.

Lordinges, this question wolde I aske
now,

Which was the moste free, as thinketh
yow?

Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
I can na-more, my tale is at an ende.

GROUP G.

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

THE PROLOGE OF THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

THE ministre and the norice un-to vyces,
Which that men clepe in English ydel-
nesse,
That porter of the gate is of delycles,
To eschue, and by hir contrarie hir op-
presse,
That is to seyn, by leveful bisnesse, 5
Wel oghten we to doon al our entente,
Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us
hente.

For he, that with his thousand cordes
slye
Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,
Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye, 10
He can so lightly cacche him in his
trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the
lappe,
He nis nat war the feend hath him in
honde;
Wel oughte us werche, and ydelnes with-
stonde.

And though men dradden never for to
dye, 15
Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,
That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,
Of which ther never comth no good en-
crees;
And seen, that slouthe hir holdeth in a
lees
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren al that othere swinke. 21

And for to putte us fro swiche ydelnesse,
That cause is of so greet confusioun,
I have heer doon my feithful bisnesse,
After the legende, in translacioun 25
Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,
Thou with thy gerland wrought of rose
and lilie;
Thee mene I, mayde and martir, seint
Cecilie !

Inuocacio ad Mariam.

And thou that flour of virgines art alle,
Of whom that Bernard list so wel to wryte,
To thee at my biginning first I calle; 31
Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me en-
dyte
Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hir
meryte
The eternal lyf, and of the feend victorie,
As man may after redem in hir storie. 35

Thou mayde and mooder, doghter of thy
sone,
Thou welle of mercy, sinful soules cure,
In whom that god, for bountee, chees to
wone,
Thou humble, and heigh over every crea-
ture,
Thou nobledest so ferforth our nature, 40
That no desdeyn the maker hadde of
kinde,
His sone in blode and flesh to clothe and
winde.

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy
sydes

Took mannes shap the eternal love and
pees,
That of the tryne compas lord and gyde
is, 45
Whom erthe and see and heven, out of
relees,
Ay herien; and thou, virgin wemmelees,
Bar of thy body, and dweltest mayden
pure,
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence 50
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich
pitee
That thou, that art the sonne of excel-
lence,
Nat only helpest hem that preyen thee,
But ofte tyme, of thy benignitee,
Ful frely, er that men thyn help bi-
seche, 55
Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful fayre
mayde,
Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of
galle;
Think on the womman Cananee, that
sayde
That whelpes eten somme of the crommes
alle 60
That from hir lordes table been y-falle;
And though that I, unworthy sone of
Eve,
Be sinful, yet accepte my bileve.

And, for that feith is deed with-outen
werkes,
So for to werken yif me wit and space, 65
That I be quit fro thennes that most derk
is!
O thou, that art so fayr and ful of grace,
Be myn advocat in that heighe place
Ther-as withouten ende is songe 'Osanne,'
Thou Cristes mooder, doghter dere of
Anne! 70

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,
That troubled is by the contagioun
Of my body, and also by the wighte
Of erthly luste and fals affeccioun;
O haven of refut, o salvacioun 75
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in distresse,
Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse.

Yet preye I yow that reden that I wryte,
Foryeve me, that I do no diligence
This ilke storie subtilly to endyte; 80
For both have I the wordes and sentence
Of him that at the seintes reverence
The storie wroot, and folwe hir legende,
And prey yow, that ye wol my werk
amende.

*Interpretacio nominis Cecilie, quam ponit
frater Iacobus Ianuensis in Legenda
Aurea.*

First wolde I yow the name of seint Ce-
cilie 85
Expoune, as men may in hir storie see,
It is to seye in English 'hevenes lillie,'
For pure chastnesse of virginitee;
Or, for she whytnesse hadde of honestee,
And grene of conscience, and of good
fame 90
The sote savour, 'lillie' was hir name.

Or Cecile is to seye 'the wey to blinde,'
For she ensample was by good techinge;
Or elles Cecile, as I writen finde,
Is ioyned, by a maner conioininge 95
Of 'hevene' and 'Lia'; and heer, in fig-
uringe,
The 'heven' is set for thought of holinesse,
And 'Lia' for hir lasting bisnesse.

Cecile may eek be seyð in this manere,
'Wanting of blindnesse,' for hir grete
light 100
Of sapience, and for hir thewes clere;
Or elles, lo! this maydens name bright
Of 'hevene' and 'leos' comth, for which
by right
Men mighte hir wel 'the heven of peple'
calle,
Ensample of gode and wyse werkes
alle. 105

For 'leos' 'peple' in English is to seye,
And right as men may in the hevene see
The sonne and mone and sterres every
weye,
Right so men gostly, in this mayden free,
Seyen of feith the magnanimittee, 110
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,
And sondry werkes, brighte of excel-
lence.

And right so as thise philosophres wryte
That heven is swift and round and eek
brenninge, 114

Right so was fayre Cecilie the whyte
Ful swift and bisy ever in good werkinge,
And round and hool in good persever-
inge,

And brenning ever in charitee ful
brighte;

Now have I yow declared what she
highte.

Explicit.

HERE BIGINNETH THE SECONDE NONNES
TALE, OF THE LYF OF SEINTE CECILE.

THIS mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf
seith, 120

Was comen of Romayns, and of noble
kinde,

And from hir cradel up fostred in the
feith

Of Crist, and bar his gospel in hir minde;
She never cessed, as I writen finde,

Of hir preyere, and god to love and
drede, 125

Biseking him to kepe hir maydenhede.

And when this mayden sholde unto a
man

Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,
Which that y-cleped was Valerian,

And day was comen of hir mariage, 130
She, ful devout and humble in hir corage,

Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful fayre,
Had next hir flesh y-clad hir in an heyre.

And whyl the organs maden melodye,
To god alone in herte thus sang she; 135

'O lord, my soule and eek my body gye
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be:'

And, for his love that deyde upon a tree,
Every seconde or thridde day she faste,

Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste. 140

The night cam, and to bedde moste she
gon

With hir housbonde, as ofte is the manere,
And prively to him she seyde anon,

'O swete and wel biloved spouse dere,
Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it

here, 145

Which that right fain I wolde unto yow
seye,

So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.'

Valerian gan faste unto hir swere,
That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,

He sholde never-mo biwreyen here; 150
And thanne at erst to him thus seyde

she,

'I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with greet love, wher-so I wake or

slepe,

Is redy ay my body for to kepe.

And if that he may felen, out of drede, 155
That ye me touche or love in vileinye,

He right anon wol slee yow with the
dede,

And in your yowthe thus ye shulden dye;
And if that ye in clene love me gye,

He wol yow loven as me, for your clen-
nesse, 160

And shewen yow his Ioye and his bright-
nesse.'

Valerian, corrected as god wolde,
Answerde agayn, 'if I shal trusten thee,

Lat me that angel se, and him biholde;
And if that it a verray angel be 165

Than wol I doon as thou hast preyed
me;

And if thou love another man, for sothe
Right with this swerd than wol I slee

yow bothe.'

Cecile answerde anon right in this wyse,
'If that yow list, the angel shul ye

see, 170
So that ye trowe on Crist and yow bap-
tysse.

Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod she,
'That fro this toun ne stant but myles

three,
And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,

Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow
telle. 175

Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem
sente,

To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,
For secree nedes and for good entente.

And whan that ye seint Urban han bi-
holde,

Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow
tolde; 180
And whan that he hath purged yow fro
sinne,
Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye
twinne.'

Valerian is to the place y-gon,
And right as him was taught by his lern-
inge,
He fond this holy olde Urban anon 185
Among the seintes buriels lotinge.
And he anon, with-outen tarynge,
Dide his message; and whan that he it
tolde,
Urban for Ioye his hondes gan up holde.

The teres from his yën leet he falle — 190
'Almighty lord, o Iesu Crist,' quod he,
'Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle,
The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to
thee!
Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with-outen gyle, 195
Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!

For thilke spouse, that she took but now
Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth here,
As meke as ever was any lamb, to yow!
And with that worde, anon ther gan
appere 200
An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere,
That hadde a book with lettre of golde in
honde,
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.

Valerian as deed fil doun for drede
Whan he him saugh, and he up hente
him tho, 205
And on his book right thus he gan to
rede —
'Oo Lord, oo feith, oo god with-outen
mo,
Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also,
Aboven alle and over al everywhere' —
These wordes al with gold y-written
were. 210

Whan this was rad, than seyde this olde
man,
'Levestow this thing or no? sey ye or
nay.'
'I leve al this thing,' quod Valerian,

'For sother thing than this, I dar wel
say,
Under the hevene no wight thinke
may.' 215
Tho vanissed the olde man, he niste
where,
And pope Urban him cristened right
there.

Valerian goth hoom, and fint Cecilie
With-inne his chambre with an angel
stonde;
This angel hadde of roses and of lilie 220
Corones two, the which he bar in honde;
And first to Cecile, as I understonde,
He yaf that oon, and after gan he take
That other to Valerian, hir make.

'With body clene and with unwemmed
thought 225
Kepeth ay wel thise corones,' quod he;
'Fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,
Ne never-mo ne shal they roten be,
Ne lese her sote savour, trusteth me;
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his
yë, 230
But he be chaast and hate vileinyë.

And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone
Assentedest to good conseil also,
Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han
thy bone.'
'I have a brother,' quod Valerian tho, 235
'That in this world I love no man so.
I pray yow that my brother may han
grace
To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this
place.'

The angel seyde, 'god lyketh thy re-
queste,
And bothe, with the palm of martir-
dom, 240
Ye shullen come unto his blisful feste.'
And with that word Tiburce his brother
com.
And whan that he the savour undernom
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,
With-inne his herte he gan to wondre
faste, 245

And seyde, 'I wondre, this tyme of the
yeer,

Whennes that sote savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies that I smelle heer.
For though I hadde hem in myn hondes
two, 249
The savour mighte in me no depper go.
The sote smel that in myn herte I finde
Hath chaunged me al in another kinde.'

Valerian seyde, 'two corones han we,
Snow-whyte and rose-reed, that shynen
clere,
Whiche that thyn yën han no might to
see; 255
And as thou smellst hem thurgh my
preyere,
So shaltow seen hem, leve brother dere,
If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,
Bilve aright and knowen verray trouthe.'

Tiburce answerde, 'seistow this to me 260
In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?'
'In dremes,' quod Valerian, 'han we be
Unto this tyme, brother myn, y-wis.
But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is.'
'How woostow this,' quod Tiburce, 'in
what wyse?' 265
Quod Valerian, 'that shal I thee devyse.'

The angel of god hath me the trouthe
y-taught
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt
reneye
The ydoles and be clene, and elles
naught.' — 269
And of the miracle of thise corones tweye
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye;
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and seith in this
manere :

The palm of martirdom for to receyve,
Seinte Cecile, fulfild of goddes yifte, 275
The world and eek hir chambre gan she
weyve;
Witnes Tyburces and Valerians shrifte,
To whiche god of his bountee wolde
shifte
Corones two of floures wel smellinge,
And made his angel hem the corones
bringe: 280

The mayde hath broght thise men to
blisse above;

The world hath wist what it is worth,
certeyn,
Devocioun of chastitee to love. —
Tho shewede him Cecile al open and
pleyn
That alle ydoles nis but a thing in veyn;
For they been dombe, and therto they
been deve, 286
And charged him his ydoles for to leve.

'Who so that troweth nat this, a beste
he is,'
Quod tho Tiburce, 'if that I shal nat
lye.'
And she gan kisse his brest, that herde
this, 290
And was ful glad he coude trouthe
espye.
'This day I take thee for myn allye,'
Seyde this blisful fayre mayde dere;
And after that she seyde as ye may here :

'Lo, right so as the love of Crist,' quod
she, 295
'Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in
that wyse
Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,
Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despyse.
Go with thy brother now, and thee
baptyse,
And make thee clene; so that thou
mowe biholde 300
The angels face of which thy brother
tolde.'

Tiburce answerde and seyde, 'brother
dere,
First tel me whider I shal, and to what
man?'
'To whom?' quod he, 'com forth with
right good chere,
I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban.'
'Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,' 306
Quod tho Tiburce, 'woltow me thider
lede?
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban,' quod he tho,
'That is so ofte dampned to be deed, 310
And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,
And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?
Men sholde him brennen in a fyr so
reed

If he were founde, or that men mighte
him spye;
And we also, to bere him companye —

And whyl we seken thilke divinitee 316
That is y-hid in hevене prively,
Algate y-brend in this world shul we
be!

To whom Cecile answerde boldely, 319
'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
This lyf to lese, myn owene dere brother,
If this were livinge only and non other.

But ther is better lyf in other place,
That never shal be lost, ne drede thee
noght,
Which goddes sone us tolde thurgh his
grace; 325
That fadres sone hath alle thinges
wrought;
And al that wrought is with a skilful
thought,
The goost, that fro the fader gan procede,
Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.

By word and by miracle goddes sone, 330
Whan he was in this world, declared
here
That ther was other lyf ther men may
wone.'
To whom answerde Tiburce, 'o suster
dere,
Ne seydestow right now in this manere,
Ther nis but o god, lord in soothfast-
nesse; 335
And now of three how maystow bere
witnessen?'

'That shal I telle,' quod she, 'er I go.
Right as a man hath sapienes three,
Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,
So, in o being of divinitee, 340
Three persones may ther right wel be.'
Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche
Of Cristes come and of his peynes teche,

And many pointes of his passioun;
How goddes sone in this world' was
withholde, 345
To doon mankinde pleyn remissioun,
That was y-bounde in sinne and cares
colde:
Al this thing she unto Tiburce tolde.

And after this Tiburce, in good entente,
With Valerian to pope Urban he wente,

That thanked god; and with glad herte
and light 351
He cristned him, and made him in that
place
Parfit in his lerninge, goddes knight.
And after this Tiburce gat swich grace,
That every day he saugh, in tyme and
space, 355
The angel of god; and every maner
bone
That he god axed, it was sped ful sone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn
How many wondres Iesus for hem
wroghte;
But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn,
The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem
soghte, 361
And hem biforn Almache the prefect
broghte,
Which hem apposed, and knew al hir
entente,
And to the image of Iupiter hem sente,

And seyde, 'who so wol nat sacrificyse,
Swap of his heed, this is my sentence
here.' 366
Anon this martirs that I yow devyise,
Oon Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes and his corniculere,
Hem hente; and whan he forth the
seintes ladde, 370
Him-self he weep, for pitee that he
hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gat him of the tormentoures leve,
And ladde hem to his hous withoute
more; 374
And with hir preching, er that it were eve,
They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone
The false feith, to trowe in god allone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen night,
With preestes that hem cristned alle
y-fere; 380
And afterward, whan day was woxen
light,
Cecile hem seyde with a ful sobre chere,

'Now, Cristes owene knightes leve and
dere,
Caste alle away the werkes of derknesse,
And armeth yow in armure of bright-
nesse. 385

Ye han for sothe y-doon a greet bataille,
Your cours is doon, your feith han ye
conserved,
Goth to the corone of lyf that may nat
faill;
The rightful Iuge, which that ye han
served,
Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.'
And whan this thing was seyld as I de-
vyse, 391
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacri-
fyse.

But whan they weren to the place broght,
To tellen shortly the conclusioun,
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right
noht, 395
But on hir knees they setten hem adoun
With humble herte and sad devocioun,
And losten bothe hir hedes in the place.
Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that saugh this thing bi-
tyde, 400
With pitous teres tolde it anon-right,
That he hir soules saugh to heven glyde
With angels ful of cleernesse and of light,
And with his word converted many a
wight;
For which Almachius dide him so to-
bete 405
With whippe of leed, til he his lyf gan
lete.

Cecile him took and buried him anoon
By Tiburce and Valerian softly,
Withinne hir burying-place, under the
ston.
And after this Almachius hastily 410
Bad his ministres fecchen openly
Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence
Doon sacrifice, and Iupiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wyse lore,
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hir word, and cryden more and
more, 416

'Crist, goddes sone withouten difference,
Is verray god, this is al our sentence,
That hath so good a servant him to serve;
This with o voys we trowen, thogh we
sterve!' 420

Almachius, that herde of this doinge,
Bad fecchen Cecile, that he might hir
see,
And alderfirst, lo! this was his axinge,
'What maner womman artow?' tho quod
he.
'I am a gentil womman born,' quod
she. 425
'I axe thee,' quod he, 'thogh it thee greve,
Of thy religioun and of thy bileve.'

'Ye han bigonne your question folily,'
Quod she, 'that wolden two answeres con-
clude
In oo demande; ye axed lewedly.' 430
Almache answerde unto that similitude,
'Of whennes comth thyn answering so
rude?'
'Of whennes?' quod she, whan that she
was freyned,
'Of conscience and of good feith un-
feyned.'

Almachius seyde, 'ne takestow non hede
Of my power?' and she answerde him
this — 436
'Your might,' quod she, 'ful litel is to
drede;
For every mortal mannes power nis
But lyk a bladdre, ful of wind, y-wis.
For with a nedles poynt, whan it is
blowe, 440
May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe.'

'Ful wrongfully bigonne thou,' quod he,
'And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;
Wostow nat how our mighty princes free
Han thus comanded and maad ordi-
naunce, 445
That every cristen wight shal han pen-
aunce
But-if that he his cristendom withseye,
And goon al quit, if he wol it reneye?'

'Your princes erren, as your nobley dooth,'
Quod tho Cecile, 'and with a wood sen-
tence 450

Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth ;
 For ye, that knowen wel our innocence,
 For as muche as we doon a reverence
 To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,
 Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame.

But we that knowen thilke name so 456
 For vertuous, we may it nat withseye.'
 Almache answerde, 'chees oon of these
 two,

Do sacrifice, or cristendom reneye,
 That thou mowe now escapen by that
 weye.' 460

At which the holy blisful fayre mayde
 Gan for to laughe, and to the Iuge seyde,

'O Iuge, confus in thy nycetee,
 Woltow that I reneye innocence,
 To make me a wikked wight?' quod
 she; 465

'Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,
 He stareth and woodeth in his adver-
 tence!'

To whom Almachius, 'unsely wrecche,
 Ne woostow nat how far my might may
 strecche?

Han noght our mighty princes to me
 yeven, 470

Ye, bothe power and auctoritee
 To maken folk to dyen or to liven?
 Why spekestow so proudly than to me?'

'I speke noght but stedfastly,' quod she,
 'Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my
 syde, 475

We haten deedly thilke vyce of pryde.

And if thou drede nat a sooth to here,
 Than wol I shewe al openly, by right,
 That thou hast maad a ful gret lesing
 here.

Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven
 might 480

Bothe for to sleen and for to quiken a
 wight;

Thou, that ne mayst but only lyf bireve,
 Thou hast non other power ne no leve!

But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee
 maked

Ministre of deeth; for if thou speke of
 mo, 485

Thou lyst, for thy power is ful naked.'

'Do wey thy boldnes,' seyde Almachius
 tho,

'And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go;
 I recche nat what wrong that thou me
 profre,

For I can suffre it as a philosopre; 490

But thilke wronges may I nat endure
 That thou spekest of our goddes here,'
 quod he.

Cecile answerede, 'o nyce creature,
 Thou seydest no word sin thou spak to
 me

That I ne knew therwith thy nycetee; 495
 And that thou were, in every maner
 wyse,

A lewed officer and a veyn Iustyse.

Ther lakketh no-thing to thyn utter yën
 That thou nart blind, for thing that we
 seen alle

That it is stoon, that men may wel es-
 pyen, 500

That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.
 I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,

And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it
 finde,

Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën
 blinde.

It is a shame that the peple shal 505
 So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye;

For comunly men woot it wel overal,
 That mighty god is in his hevenes hye,

And these images, wel thou mayst espye,
 To thee ne to hem-self mowe nought

profyte, 510

For in effect they been nat worth a
 myte.'

These wordes and swiche othere seyde
 she,

And he weex wroth, and bad men sholde
 hir lede

Hom til hir hous, 'and in hir hous,'
 quod he,

'Brenne hir right in a bath of flambes
 rede.' 515

And as he bad, right so was doon in
 dede;

For in a bath they gonne hir faste shetten,
 And night and day greet fyr they under
 betten.

The longe night and eek a day also,
 For al the fyr and eek the bathes hete,
 She sat al cold, and felede no wo, 521
 It made hir nat a drope for to swete.
 But in that bath hir lyf she moste lete;
 For he, Almachius, with ful wikke en-
 tente 524
 To sleen hir in the bath his sonde sente.

Three strokes in the nekke he smoot hir
 tho,
 The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
 He mighte noght smyte al hir nekke
 a-two;
 And for ther was that tyme an ordi-
 nauce,
 That no man sholde doon man swich
 penaunce 530
 The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or sore,
 This tormentour ne dorste do na-more.

But half-deed, with hir nekke y-corven
 there,
 He lefte hir lye, and on his way is went.
 The Cristen folk, which that aboute hir
 were, 535

With shetes han the blood ful faire
 y-hent.
 Thre dayes lived she in this torment,
 And never cessed hem the feith to teche;
 That she hadde fostred, hem she gan to
 preche;

And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir
 thing, 540
 And to the pope Urban bitook hem tho,
 And seyde, 'I axed this at hevene king,
 To han respyt thre dayes and na-mo,
 To recomende to yow, er that I go,
 These soules, lo! and that I mighte do
 werche 545
 Here of myn hous perpetuely a cherche.'

Seint Urban, with his deknes, prively
 The body fette, and buried it by nighte
 Among his othere seintes honestly.
 Hir hous the chirche of seint Cecilie
 highte; 550
 Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte;
 In which, into this day, in noble wyse,
 Men doon to Crist and to his seint ser-
 vyse.

Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE.

*The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes
 Tale.*

WHAN ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,
 Er we had riden fully fyve myle, 555
 At Boghton under Blee us gan atake
 A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
 And undernethe he hadde a whyte sur-
 pplys.
 His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
 So swatte, that it wonder was to see; 560
 It semed he had priked myles thre.
 The hors eek that his yeman rood upon
 So swatte, that unnethe mighte it gon.
 Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful
 hye,
 He was of fome al flekked as a pye. 565
 A male tweyfold on his croper lay,

It semed that he caried lyte array.
 Al light for somer rood this worthy man,
 And in myn herte wondren I bigan
 What that he was, til that I understood
 How that his cloke was sowed to his
 hood; 571
 For which, when I had longe avysed me,
 I demed him som chanon for to be.
 His hat heng at his bak down by a laas,
 For he had riden more than trot or
 paas; 575
 He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.
 A clote-leef he hadde under his hood
 For swoot and for to kepe his heed from
 hete.
 But it was Ioye for to seen him swete!
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie, 580
 Were ful of plantain and of paritorie.

And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,
 'God save,' quod he, 'this Ioly companye!
 Faste have I priked,' quod he, 'for your sake,
 By-cause that I wolde yow atake, 585
 To ryden in this mery companye.'
 His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
 And seyde, 'sires, now in the morwe-tyde
 Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde,
 And warned heer my lord and my soverayn, 590
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,
 For his desport; he loveth daliaunce.'
 'Freend, for thy warning god yeve thee good chaunce,'
 Than seyde our host, 'for certes, it wolde seme
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme; 595
 He is ful Iocund also, dar I leye,
 Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye,
 With which he glade may this companye?'
 'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,
 He can of murthe, and eek of Iolitee 600
 Nat but ynough; also sir, trusteth me,
 And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse.
 He hath take on him many a greet em-
 pryse, 605
 Which were ful hard for any that is here
 To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.
 As homely as he rit amonges yow,
 If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your
 prow; 609
 Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce
 For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce
 Al that I have in my possessioun.
 He is a man of heigh discrecioun,
 I warne you wel, he is a passing man.'
 'Wel,' quod our host, 'I pray thee,
 tel me than, 615
 Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is.'
 'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y-wis,'
 Seyde this yeman, 'and in wordes fewe,
 Host, of his craft som-what I wol yow
 shewe. 619

I seye, my lord can swich subtilitee —
 (But al his craft ye may nat wite at me;
 And som-what helpe I yet to his werk-
 ing) —
 That al this ground on which we been
 ryding,
 Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,
 He coude al clene turne it up-so-doun,
 And pave it al of silver and of gold.' 626
 And whan this yeman hadde thus
 y-told
 Unto our host, he seyde, '*benedicite!*
 This thing is wonder merveillous to me,
 Sin that thy lord is of so heigh prudence,
 By-cause of which men sholde him rever-
 ence, 631
 That of his worship rekketh he so lyte;
 His oversloppe nis nat worth a myte,
 As in effect, to him, so mote I go!
 It is al bauldy and to-tore also. 635
 Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee preye,
 And is of power better cloth to beye,
 If that his dede accorde with thy speche?
 Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.'
 'Why?' quod this yeman, 'wherto axe
 ye me? 640
 God help me so, for he shal never thee!
 (But I wol nat avowe that I seye,
 And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye).
 He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve;
 That that is overdoon, it wol nat preve
 Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vyce. 646
 Wherfor in that I holde him lewed and
 nyce.
 For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,
 Ful oft him happeth to misusen it;
 So dooth my lord, and that me greveth
 sore. 650
 God it amende, I can sey yow na-more.'
 'Ther-of no fors, good yeman,' quod
 our host;
 'Sin of the conning of thy lord thou
 wost,
 Tel how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly. 655
 Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?'
 'In the suburbes of a toun,' quod he,
 'Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,
 Wher-as these robbours and these theves
 by kinde
 Holden hir privee fereful residence, 660
 As they that dar nat shewen hir pres-
 ence;

So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe.
 'Now,' quod our host, 'yit lat me talke
 to the;

Why artow so discoloured of thy face?'
 'Peter!' quod he, 'god yeve it harde
 grace, 665

I am so used in the fyr to blowe,
 That it hath changed my colour, I
 trowe.

I am nat wont in no mirour to pryde,
 But swinke sore and lerne multiplye.
 We blondren ever and pouren in the fyr,
 And for al that we fayle of our desyr, 671

For ever we lakken our conclusioun.
 To mochel folk we doon illusioun,
 And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,
 Or ten, or twelve, or many sommes mo,
 And make hem wenen, at the leeste
 weye, 676

That of a pound we coude make tweye!
 Yet it is fals, but ay we han good hope
 It for to doon, and after it we grope.
 But that science is so fer us biforn, 680
 We mowen nat, al-though we hadde it
 sworn,

It overtake, it slit away so faste;
 It wol us maken beggers atte laste.'
 Why! this yeman was thus in his talk-
 ing,

This chanoun drough him neer, and herde
 al thing 685
 Which this yeman spak, for suspecioun
 Of mennes speche ever hadde this
 chanoun.

For Catoun seith, that he that gilty is
 Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y-wis.
 That was the cause he gan so ny him
 drawe 690
 To his yeman, to herknen al his sawe.

And thus he seyde un-to his yeman tho,
 'Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes
 mo,

For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abyde;
 Thou sclaudrest me heer in this com-
 panye, 695

And eek discoverest that thou sholdest
 hyde.'

'Ye,' quod our host, 'telle on, what so
 bityde;

Of al his threting rekke nat a myte!
 'In feith,' quod he, 'namore I do but
 lyte.'

And whan this chanon saugh it wolde
 nat be, 700

But his yeman wolde telle his privitee,
 He fledde away for verray sorwe and
 shame.

'A!' quod the yeman, 'heer shal aryse
 game,

Al that I can anon now wol I telle.
 Sin he is goon, the foule feend him
 quelle! 705

For never her-after wol I with him mete
 For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete!
 He that me broghte first unto that game,
 Er that he dye, sorwe have he and
 shame!

For it is ernest to me, by my feith; 710
 That fele I wel, what so any man seith.

And yet, for al my smert and al my grief,
 For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
 I coude never leve it in no wyse.

Now wolde god my wit mighte suffyse
 To tellen al that longeth to that art! 716
 But natheles yow wol I tellen part;

Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare;
 Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol de-
 clare. —

Here endeth the Prologe of the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

THE CHANOUNS YEMANNES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE CHANOUNS YE-
 MAN HIS TALE.

[*Prima pars.*]

WITH this chanoun I dwelt have seven
 yeer, 720
 And of his science am I never the neer.

Al that I hadde, I have y-lost ther-by;
 And god wot, so hath many mo than I.
 Ther I was wont to be right fresh and
 gay

Of clothing and of other good array, 725
 Now may I were an hose upon myn
 heed;

And wher my colour was bothe fresh and
reed,

Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;
Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.

And of my swink yet blered is myn yë,
Lo! which avantage is to multiplie! 731
That slyding science hath me maad so
bare,

That I have no good, wher that ever I
fare;

And yet I am endetted so ther-by
Of gold that I have borwed, trewely, 735
That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never.

Lat every man be war by me for ever!
What maner man that casteth him
ther-to,

If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do.
So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat
winne, 740

But empte his purs, and make his wittes
thinne.

And whan he, thurgh his madnes and
folye,

Hath lost his owene good thurgh Iu-
partye,

Thanne he excyteth other folk ther-to,
To lese hir good as he him-self hath do.
For unto shrewes Ioye it is and ese 746

To have hir felawes in peyne and dis-
ese;

Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
Of that no charge, I wol speke of our
werk.

Whan we been ther as we shul exer-
cyse 750

Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,
Our termes been so clerghial and so
queynte.

I blowe the fyr til that myn herte feynte.

What sholde I tellen ech proporcioun
Of thinges whiche that we werche upon,
As on five or sixe ounces, may wel be,

Of silver or som other quantite, 757

And bisie me to telle yow the names
Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,
That into poudre grounden been ful
smaal? 760

And in an erthen potte how put is al,
And salt y-put in, and also papeer,
Biforn thise poudres that I speke of
heer,

And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas,

And mochel other thing which that ther
was? 765

And of the pot and glasses enluting,
That of the eyre mighte passe out no-
thing?

And of the esy fyr and smart also,
Which that was maad, and of the care
and wo

That we hadde in our matires sublyming,
And in amalgaming and calcening 771
Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude?
For alle our sleightes we can nat con-
clude.

Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eek on the por-
phurie, 775

Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn
Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.
Ne eek our spiritres ascencioun,
Ne our materes that lyen al fixe adoun,
Mowe in our werking no-thing us avayle.
For lost is al our labour and travayle, 781
And al the cost, a twenty devel weye,
Is lost also, which we upon it leye.

Ther is also ful many another thing
That is unto our craft apertening; 785
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce
can,

By-cause that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to
minde,

Though I ne can nat sette hem in hir
kinde;

As bole armoniak, verdegrees, boras, 790
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and
glas,

Our urinales and our descensories,
Violes, croslets, and sublymatories,
Cucurbites, and alembykes eek, 794

And other swiche, dere y-nough a leek.
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,

Watres rubifying and boles galle,
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstoon;
And herbes coude I telle eek many oon,

As egreimoine, valerian, and lunarie, 800
And other swiche, if that me liste tarie.
Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
To bringe aboute our craft, if that we
may.

Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,
And of watres albificacioun, 805

Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an
ey,

Poudres diverse, asshes, dong, pisse, and
 cley,
 Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole;
 And divers fyres maad of wode and cole;
 Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat, 810
 And combust materes and coagulat,
 Cley maad with hors or mannes heer,
 and oile
 Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and
 argoile,
 Resalgar, and our materes enbibing;
 And eek of our materes encorporing, 815
 And of our silver citrinacioun,
 Our cementing and fermentacioun,
 Our ingottes, testes, and many mo.
 I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,
 The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
 By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem
 nevene. 821
 The first spirit quik-silver called is,
 The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,
 Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.
 The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heer
 anon: 825
 Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,
 Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,
 Saturnus leed, and Iupiter is tin,
 And Venus coper, by my fader kin!
 This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse,
 He shal no good han that him may
 suffyse; 831
 For al the good he spendeth ther-about, e,
 He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute.
 Who-so that listeth outhen his folye,
 Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplye;
 And every man that oght hath in his
 cofre, 836
 Lat him appere, and wexe a filosofre.
 Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere?
 Nay, nay, god woot, al be he monk or frere,
 Preest or chanoun, or any other wight,
 Though he sitte at his book bothe day
 and night, 841
 In lernyng of this elvish nyce lore,
 Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more!
 To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee, 844
 Fy! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be;
 Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,
 As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.
 For bothe two, by my savacioun,
 Concluden, in multiplicacioun,
 Y-lyke wel, whan they han al y-do; 850
 This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.

Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille
 Of watres corosif and of limaille,
 And of bodyes mollificacioun,
 And also of hir induracioun, 855
 Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,
 To tellen al wolde passen any bible
 That o-wher is; wherfor, as for the
 beste,
 Of alle this names now wol I me reste.
 For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe
 To reyse a feend, al loke he never so
 rowe. 861
 A! nay! lat be; the philosophres
 stoon,
 Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon;
 For hadde we him, than were we siker
 y-now. 864
 But, unto god of heven I make avow,
 For al our craft, whan we han al y-do,
 And al our sleighte, he wol nat come us
 to.
 He hath y-maad us spenden mochel good,
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen
 wood, 869
 But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
 Supposinge ever, though we sore smerte,
 To be releved by him afterward;
 Swich supposing and hope is sharp and
 hard;
 I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever;
 That futur temps hath maad men to dis-
 sever,
 In trust ther-of, from al that ever they
 hadde. 876
 Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,
 For unto hem it is a bitter swete;
 So semeth it; for nadde they but a shete
 Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne
 a-night, 880
 And a bak to walken inne by day-light,
 They wolde hem selle and spenden on
 this craft;
 They can nat stinte til no-thing be laft.
 And evermore, wher that ever they goon,
 Men may hem knowe by smel of brim-
 stoon; 885
 For al the world, they stinken as a goot;
 Her savour is so rammish and so hoot,
 That, though a man from hem a myle be,
 The savour wol infecte him, trusteth
 me;
 Lo, thus by smelling and threedbare
 array, 890

If that men liste, this folk they knowe
may.

And if a man wol aske hem prively,
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rownen in his ere,
And seyn, that if that they espyed were,
Men wolde hem slee, by-cause of hir
science; 896

Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!

Passé over this; I go my tale un-to.
Er than the pot be on the fyr y-do,
Of metals with a certein quantite, 900
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but
he —

Now he is goon, I dar seyn boldely —
For, as men seyn, he can don craftily;
Algate I woot wel he hath swich a
name,

And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame;
And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth
so, 906

The pot to-breketh, and farewel! al is
go!

These metals been of so greet violence,
Our walles mowe nat make hem resist-
ence,

But if they weren wrought of lym and
ston; 910

They percen so, and thurgh the wal
they goon,

And somme of hem sincken in-to the
ground —

Thus han we lost by tymes many a
pound —

And somme are scatered al the floor
abouté,

Somme lepe in-to the roof; with-outen
doute, 915

Though that the feend noght in our
sighté him shewe,

I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!
In helle wher that he is lord and sire,
Nis ther more wo, ne more raneour ne
ire.

Whan that our pot is broke, as I have
sayd, 920

Every man chit, and halt him yvel
apayd.

Som seyde, it was long on the fyr-
making,

Som seyde, nay! it was on the blowing;
(Than was I fered, for that was myn
office);

‘Straw!’ quod the thridde, ‘ye been
lewed and nyce, 925

It was nat tempred as it oghte be.’

‘Nay!’ quod the ferthe, ‘stint, and
herkne me;

By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of
beech,

That is the cause, and other noon, so
theech!’

I can nat telle wher-on it was long, 930
But wel I wot greet stryf is us among.

‘What!’ quod my lord, ‘ther is na-
more to done,

Of this perils I wol be war eft-soné;
I am right siker that the pot was crased.

Be as he may, be ye no-thing amased;
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as
swythe, 936

Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladdé
and blythe.’

The mullok on an hepe y-sweped was,
And on the floor y-cast a canevas, 939

And al this mullok in a sive y-throwe,
And sifted, and y-piked many a throwe.

‘Pardee,’ quod oon, ‘somwhat of our
metal

Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat
al.

Al-though this thing mishapped have
as now,

Another tyme it may be wel y-now, 945
Us moste putte our good in aventure;

A marchant, parde! may nat ay endure,
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;

Somtyme his good is drenched in the
see,

And somtym comth it sauf un-to the
londe.’ 950

‘Pees!’ quod my lord, ‘the next tyme
I wol fopde

To bringe our craft al in another plyte;
And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte;

Ther was defeaute in som-what, wel I
woot.’

Another seyde, the fyr was over
hoot: — 955

But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,
That we concluden evermore amis.

We fayle of that which that we wolden
have,

And in our madnesse evermore we rave.
And whan we been togidres everchoon,

Every man semeth a Salomon. 961

But al thing which that shyneth as the
gold
Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it
told;
Ne every appel that is fair at yē
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or
crye. 965
Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;
He that semeth the wysest, by Iesus!
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the
preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a theef;
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow
wende, 970
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

*Explicit prima pars. Et sequitur pars
secunda.*

Ther is a chanoun of religioun
Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun
Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere
three. 975
His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse
Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,
Though that he mighte liven a thousand
yeer.
In al this world of falshede nis his
peer;
For in his termes so he wolde him
winde, 980
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,
Whan he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as him-selven is. 984
Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this,
And wol, if that he live may a whyle;
And yet men ryde and goon ful many a
myle
Him for to seke and have his aqueynt-
aunce,
Noght knowinge of his false gover-
naunce.
And if yow list to yeve me audience, 990
I wol it tellen heer in your presence.
But worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth nat that I sclaudre your
hous,
Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.
Of every ordre som shrewe is, parde, 995
And god forbede that al a compagne
Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.

To sclaudre yow is no-thing myn
entente,
But to correcten that is mis I mente.
This tale was nat only told for yow, 1000
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel
how
That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,
Ther nas no traytour but Iudas him-
selve.
Than why sholde al the remenant have
blame
That gilltees were? by yow I seye the
same. 1005
Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,
If any Iudas in your covent be,
Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
And beth no-thing displeyd, I yow
preye, 1010
But in this cas herkne what I shal seye.

In London was a preest, an annue-
leer,
That therin dwelled hadde many a
yeer, 1014
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable
Unto the wyf, wher-as he was at table,
That she wolde suffre him no-thing for
to paye
For bord ne clothing, wente he never
so gaye;
And spending-silver hadde he right
y-now. 1018
Therof no fors; I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte this preest to confusioun.
This false chanoun cam up-on a day
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he
lay,
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quyte it him
ageyn. 1025
'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes
three,
And at my day I wol it quyten thee.
And if so be that thou me finde fals,
Another day do hange me by the hals!'
This preest him took a mark, and that
a swysthe, 1030
And this chanoun him thanked ofte
sythe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his
weye,

And at the thridde day broghte his
 moneye,
 And to the preest he took his gold
 agayn,
 Wherof this preest was wonder glad and
 fayn. 1035
 'Certes,' quod he, 'no-thing anoyeth
 me
 To lene a man a noble, or two or three,
 Or what thing were in my possessioun,
 Whan he so trewe is of condicioun, 1039
 That in no wyse he breke wol his day;
 To swich a man I can never seye nay.'
 'What!' quod this chanoun, 'sholde
 I be untrewed?
 Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe.
 Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe
 Un-to that day in which that I shal
 crepe 1045
 In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;
 Bileveth this as siker as is your crede.
 God thanke I, and in good tyme be it
 sayd, 1048
 That ther was never man yet yvel apayd
 For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
 Ne never falshede in myn herte I mente.
 And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privetee,
 Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,
 And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,
 Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,
 I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,
 I wol yow teche pleylnly the manere, 1057
 How I can werken in philosophye.
 Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at
 yē,
 That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.' 1060
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'ye, sir, and wol
 ye so?
 Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely!'
 'At your comandement, sir, trewely,'
 Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god for-
 bede!'
 Lo, how this thief coude his servyse
 bede! 1065
 Ful sooth it is, that swich profred ser-
 vyse
 Stinketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse;
 And that ful sone I wol it verifeye
 In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,
 That ever-more delyt hath and glad-
 nesse — 1070
 Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte im-
 presse —

How Cristes peple he may to meschief
 bringe;
 God kepe us from his fals dissimulinge!
 Noght wiste this preest with whom
 that he delte,
 Ne of his harm cominge he no-thing
 felte. 1075
 O sely preest! O sely innocent!
 With coveteise anon thou shalt be blent!
 O gracelees, ful blind is thy conceit,
 No-thing ne artow war of the deceit
 Which that this fox y-shapen hath to
 thee! 1080
 His wyly wrenches thou ne mayst nat
 flee
 Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun
 That refereth to thy confusioun,
 Unhappy man! anon I wol me hye
 To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye, 1085
 And eek the falsnesse of that other
 wrecche,
 As ferforth as that my conning may
 strecche.
 This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden
 wene?
 Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes
 quene,
 It was another chanoun, and nat he, 1090
 That can an hundred fold more subtiltee!
 He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;
 Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme.
 Ever whan that I speke of his falshede,
 For shame of him my chekes waxen
 rede; 1095
 Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,
 For reednesse have I noon, right wel I
 knowe,
 In my visage; for fumes dyverse
 Of metals, which ye han herd me re-
 herce,
 Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.
 Now tak heed of this chanouns cursed-
 nesse! 1101
 'Sir,' quod he to the preest, 'lat your
 man gon
 For quik-silver, that we it hadde anon;
 And lat him bringen ounces two or
 three;
 And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see
 A wonder thing, which saugh never er
 this.' 1106
 'Sir,' quod the preest, 'it shal be doon,
 y-wis.'

He bad his servant fecchen him this
 thing,
 And he al redy was at his bidding,
 And wente him forth, and cam anon
 agayn 1110
 With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn,
 And took these ounces three to the chan-
 oun;
 And he hem leyde fayre and wel adoun,
 And bad the servant coles for to bringe,
 That he anon mighte go to his werk-
 inge. 1115
 The coles right anon weren y-fet,
 And this chanoun took out a crosselet
 Of his bosom, and shewed it the preest.
 'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that
 thou seest,
 Tak in thyn hand, and put thy-self ther-
 inne 1120
 Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer
 biginne,
 In the name of Crist, to wexe a philoso-
 fre.
 Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde
 profre
 To shewen hem thus muche of my
 science.
 For ye shul seen heer, by experience,
 That this quik-silver wol I mortifye 1126
 Right in your sighte anon, withouten
 lye,
 And make it as good silver and as fyn
 As ther is any in your purs or myn,
 Or elleswher, and make it malliable; 1130
 And elles, holdeth me fals and unable
 Amonges folk for ever to appere!
 I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere,
 Shal make al good, for it is cause of al
 My conning, which that I yow shewen
 shal. 1135
 Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-
 oute,
 And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute
 Our privetee, that no man us espye
 Whyls that we werke in this philoso-
 phye.'
 Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede, 1140
 This ilke servant anon-right out yede,
 And his maister shette the dore anon,
 And to hir labour speedily they gon.
 This preest, at this cursed chanouns
 bidding,
 Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing, 1145

And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful
 faste;
 And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste
 A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was
 Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas,
 Or som-what elles, was nat worth a flye,
 To blynde with the preest; and bad him
 hye 1151
 The coles for to couchen al above
 The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee
 love,'
 Quod this chanoun, 'thyn owene hondes
 two
 Shul werche al thing which that shal
 heer be do.' 1155
 'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and
 was ful glad,
 And couched coles as the chanoun bad.
 And whyle he bisy was, this feendly
 wrecche,
 This fals chanoun, the foule feend him
 fecche!
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole, 1160
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
 And ther-in put was of silver lymaille
 An ounce, and stopped was, with-uten
 fayle,
 The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.
 And understondeth, that this false
 gin 1165
 Was nat maad ther, but it was maad
 bifore;
 And othere thinges I shal telle more
 Herafterward, which that he with him
 broghte;
 Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoughte,
 And so he dide, er that they wente
 a-twinne; 1170
 Til he had terved him, coude he not
 blinne.
 It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,
 On his faldrede fayn wolde I me wreke,
 If I wiste how; but he is heer and ther:
 He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher. 1175
 But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes
 love!
 He took his cole of which I spak above,
 And in his hond he baar it prively.
 And whyls the preest couchede busily
 The coles, as I tolde yow er this, 1180
 This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon
 amis;
 This is nat couched as it oghte be;

But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he.
 'Now lat me medle therwith but a whyle,
 For of yow have I pitee, by seint
 Gyle! 1185
 Ye been right hoot, I see wel how ye
 swete,
 I have heer a cloth, and wye away the
 wete.'
 And whyles that the preest wyped his
 face,
 This chanoun took his cole with harde
 grace,
 And leyde it above, up-on the midde-
 ward 1190
 Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,
 Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
 'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chan-
 oun thenne,
 'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake;
 Sitte we doun, and lat us mery
 make.' 1195
 And whan that this chanounes bechen
 cole
 Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the
 hole,
 Into the croslet fil anon adoun;
 And so it moste nedes, by resoun,
 Sin it so even aboven couched was; 1200
 But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing,
 alas!
 He demed alle the coles y-liche good,
 For of the sleighte he no-thing under-
 stood.
 And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,
 'Rys up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stond-
 eth by me; 1205
 And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,
 Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-
 stoon;
 For I wol make oon of the same shap
 That is an ingot, if I may han hap.
 And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a
 panne, 1210
 Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne
 How that our bisnesse shal thryve and
 preve.
 And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve
 Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,
 I ne wol nat been out of your pres-
 ence, 1215
 But go with yow, and come with yow
 ageyn.'
 The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,

They opened and shette, and wente hir
 weye.
 And forth with hem they carieden the
 keye, 1219
 And come agayn with-outen any delay.
 What sholde I tarien al the longe day?
 He took the chalk, and shoop it in the
 wyse
 Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.
 I seye, he took out of his owene sleve,
 A teyne of silver (yvele mote he
 cheve!) 1225
 Which that he was nat but an ounce of
 weighte;
 And taketh heel now of his cursed
 sleighte!
 He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek
 in brede,
 Of this teyne, with-outen any drede, 1229
 So slyly, that the preest it nat espyde;
 And in his sleve agayn he gan it hyde;
 And fro the fyr he took up his matere,
 And in thingot putte it with mery chere,
 And in the water-vessel he it caste
 Whan that him luste, and bad the preest
 as faste, 1235
 'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and
 grope,
 Thow finde shalt ther silver, as I hope;
 What, devel of helle! sholde it elles be?
 Shaving of silver silver is, pardee!'
 He putte his hond in, and took up a
 teyne 1240
 Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne
 Was this preest, whan he saugh that it
 was so.
 'Goddess blessing, and his modres also,
 And alle halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'
 Seyde this preest, 'and I hir mali-
 soun, 1245
 But, and ye vouche-sauf to techen me
 This noble craft and this subtilitee,
 I wol be youre, in al that ever I may!'
 Quod the chanoun, 'yet wol I make
 assay
 The second tyme, that ye may taken
 hede 1250
 And been expert of this, and in your
 nede
 Another day assaye in myn absence
 This disciplyne and this crafty science.
 Lat take anotner ounce,' quod he tho,
 'Of quik-silver, with-outen wordes mo,

And do ther-with as ye han doon er this
 With that other, which that now silver is.
 This preest him bisieth in al that he
 can
 To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
 Comanded him, and faste he blew the
 fyr, 1260
 For to come to theeffect of his desyr.
 And this chanoun, right in the mene
 whyle,
 Al redy was, the preest eft to bigyle,
 And, for a countenance, in his hande he
 bar 1264
 An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war!)
 In the ende of which an ounce, and na-
 more,
 Of silver lymail put was, as bifore
 Was in his cole, and stopped with wex
 weel
 For to kepe in his lymail every deel.
 And whyl this preest was in his bisi-
 nesse, 1270
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him
 dresse
 To him anon, and his pouder caste in
 As he did er; (the devel out of his skin
 Him terve, I pray to god, for his fals-
 hede;
 For he was ever fals in thoght and
 dede); 1275
 And with this stikke, above the croslet,
 That was ordeyned with that false get,
 He stired the coles, til relente gan
 The wex agayn the fyr, as every man,
 But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede, 1280
 And al that in the stikke was out yede,
 And in the croslet hastily it fel.
 Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than
 wel?
 Whan that this preest thus was bigyled
 ageyn,
 Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to
 seyn, 1285
 He was so glad, that I can nat expresse
 In no manere his mirthe and his glad-
 nesse;
 And to the chanoun he profred eftson
 Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun
 sone,
 'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me
 finde; 1290
 I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.
 Is ther any coper her-inne?' seyde he.

'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel
 ther be.'
 'Elles go by us som, and that as swythe,
 Now, gode sir, go forth thy wey and hy
 the.' 1295
 He wente his wey, and with the coper
 cam,
 And this chanoun it in his handes nam,
 And of that coper weyed out but an
 ounce.
 Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,
 As ministre of my wit, the double-
 nesse 1300
 Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.
 He semed frendly to hem that knewe
 him noght,
 But he was fendly bothe in herte and
 thoght.
 It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,
 And natheles yet wol I it expresse, 1305
 To thentente that men may be war therby,
 And for noon other cause, trewely.
 He putte his ounce of coper in the
 croslet,
 And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,
 And caste in poudre, and made the preest
 to blowe, 1310
 And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,
 As he dide er, and al nas but a Iape;
 Right as him liste, the preest he made
 his ape;
 And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
 And in the panne putte it at the
 laste 1315
 Of water, and in he putte his owene
 hond.
 And in his sleeve (as ye biforn-hond
 Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne.
 He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne—
 Unwiting this preest of his false
 craft— 1320
 And in the pannes botme he hath it
 laft;
 And in the water rombled to and fro,
 And wonder prively took up also
 The coper teyne, noght knowing this
 preest,
 And hidde it, and him hente by the
 breest, 1325
 And to him spak, and thus seyde in his
 game,
 'Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,
 Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,

Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther.'

This preest took up this silver teyne anon, 1330

And thanne seyde the chanoun, 'lat us gon

With these three teynes, which that we han wrought,

To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght.

For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood, But-if that they were silver, fyn and good,

And that as swythe preved shal it be.' 1335

Un-to the goldsmith with these teynes three

They wente, and putte these teynes in assay

To fyr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,

But that they weren as hem oghte be. 1340

This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?

Was never brid gladder agayn the day, Ne nightingale, in the sesoun of May,

Nas never noon that luste bet to singe; Ne lady lustier in carolinge

Or for to speke of love and womman-hede, 1345

Ne knight in armes to doon an hardy dede

To stonde in grace of his lady dere, Than had this preest this sory craft to lere;

And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde, 1350

'For love of god, that for us alle deyde, And as I may deserve it un-to yow,

What shal this receit coste? telleth now!'

'By our lady,' quod this chanoun, 'it is dere,

I warne yow wel; for, save I and a frere,

In Engelond ther can no man it make.' 1355

'No fors,' quod he, 'now, sir, for goddes sake,

What shal I paye? telleth me, I preye.'

'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye; Sir, a word, if that thee list it have, 1360

Ye shul paye fourty pound, so god me save!

And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this

To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.'

This preest the somme of fourty pound anon

Of nobles fette, and took hem ever-ichon 1365

To this chanoun, for this ilke receit; Al his werking nas but fraude and deceit.

'Sir preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos

Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;

And as ye love me, kepeth it scree; 1370

For, and men knewe al my subtilitee, By god, they wolden han so greet envye

To me, by-cause of my philosophye, I sholde be deed, ther were non other weye.'

'God it forbede!' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?' 1375

Yet hadde I lever spenden al the good Which that I have (and elles waxe I wood!)

Than that ye sholden falle in swich mescheef.'

'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'

Quod the chanoun, 'and far-wel, grant mercy!' 1380

He wente his way and never the preest him sy

After that day; and whan that this preest sholde

Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde, Of this receit, far-wel! it wolde nat be!

Lo, thus byiaped and bigyled was he! 1385

Thus maketh he his introduccioun To bringe folk to hir destruccioun.—

Considereth, sirs, how that, in ech estaat,

Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat

So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon. 1390

This multiplying blent so many oon, That in good feith I trowe that it be

The cause grettest of swich scarsetee. Philosophres speken so mistily

In this craft, that men can nat come therby, 1395

For any wit that men han now a-dayes.

They mowe wel chiteren, as doon this
Iayes,
And in her termes sette hir lust and
peyne,
But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne,
A man may lightly lerne, if he have
aught, 1400
To multiplie, and bringe his good to
naught!
Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,
A mannes mirthe it wol torne un-to
grame,
And empten also grete and hevy purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen
curses 1405
Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.
O! fy! for shame! they that han been
brent,
Allas! can they nat flee the fyres hete?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,
Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is
late. 1410
Never to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never
finde;
Ye been as bolde as is Bayard the blinde,
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth
noon;
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon 1415
As for to goon besydes in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
If that your yën can nat seen aright,
Loke that your minde lakke nought his
sight.
For, though ye loke never so brode, and
stare, 1420
Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaf-
fare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,
For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful
clene. 1425
And right as swythe I wol yow tellen
here,
What philosophres seyn in this matere.
Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe
Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencion;
He seith right thus, with-outen any
lye, 1430
'Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,
But it be with his brother knowleching.

How that he, which that first seyde this
thing,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragoun, doute-
lees, 1435
Ne deyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other
He understood; and brimstoon by his
brother,
That out of *sol* and *luna* were y-drawe.
And therfor, seyde he, 'tak heed to my
sawe, 1441
Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,
But-if that he thentencioun and speche
Of philosophres understonde can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man. 1445
For this science and this conning,' quod
he,
'Is of the secree of secrees, parde.'
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witnesse,
And this was his demande in soothfast-
nesse: 1451
'Tel me the name of the privy stoon?'
And Plato answerde unto him anoon,
'Tak the stoon that Titanos men name.'
'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnesia
is the same,' 1455
Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sir, and is it thus?
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow
preye?'
'It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato. 1460
'Tel me the rote, good sir,' quod he tho,
'Of that water, if that it be your wille?'
'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certe in, that I
nille.
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,
That they sholden discovere it un-to
noon, 1465
Ne in no book it wryte in no manere;
For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere
That he wol nat that it discovered be,
But wher it lyketh to his deitee
Man for tenspyre, and eek for to defende
Whom that him lyketh; lo, this is the
ende.' 1471
Thanne conclude I thus; sith god of
hevene
Ne wol nat that the philosophres nevene

How that a man shal come un-to this
 stoon,
 I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon. 1475
 For who-so maketh god his adversarie,
 As for to werken any thing in contrarie

Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,
 Thogh that he multiplye terme of his lyve.
 And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale;
 God sende every trewe man bote of his
 bale! — Amen. 1481

Here is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

GROUP H.

THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE.

Here foloweth the Prologe of the Maunciples Tale.

WITE ye nat wher ther stant a litel toun
 Which that y-cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,
 Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?
 Ther gan our hoste for to Iape and pleye,
 And seyde, 'sirs, what! Dun is in the
 myre! 5
 Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,
 That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?
 A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and
 binde.
 See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes
 bones,
 As he wol falle from his hors at ones. 10
 Is that a cook of Londoun, with mes-
 chaunce?
 Do him come forth, he knoweth his pen-
 aunce,
 For he shal telle a tale, by my fey!
 Al-though it be nat worth a botel hey.
 Awake, thou cook,' quod he, 'god yeve
 thee sorwe, 15
 What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
 Hastow had fleen al night, or artow
 dronke,
 Or hastow with som quene al night
 y-swonke,
 So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn
 heed?'
 This cook, that was ful pale and no-
 thing reed, 20
 Seyde to our host, 'so god my soule
 blesse,
 As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse,
 Noot I nat why, that me were lever slepe
 Than the beste galoun wyn in Chepe.'

'Wel,' quod the maunciple, 'if it may
 doon ese 25
 To thee, sir cook, and to no wight dis-
 plese
 Which that heer rydeth in this companye,
 And that our host wol, of his curteisey,
 I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;
 For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
 Thyn yën daswen eek, as that me think-
 eth, 31
 And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure
 stinketh,
 That sheweth wel thou art not wel dis-
 posed;
 Of me, certain, thou shalt nat been
 y-glosed.
 Se how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight,
 As though he wolde us swolwe anon-
 right. 36
 Hold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader
 kin!
 The devel of helle sette his foot ther-in!
 Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle;
 Fy, stinking swyn, fy! foule moot thee
 falle! 40
 A! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.
 Now, swete sir, wol ye Iusten atte fan?
 Ther-to me thinketh ye been wel y-
 shape!
 I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
 And that is whan men pleyen with a
 straw.' 45
 Aud with this speche the cook wex
 wrooth and wraw,
 And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste
 For lakke of speche, and doun the hors
 him caste,
 Wher as he lay, til that men up him took;

This was a fayr chivachee of a cook! 50
 Allas! he nadde holde him by his ladel!
 And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
 Ther was greet showving bothe to and
 fro,
 To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,
 So unwelwy was this scry palled gost. 55
 And to the maunciple thanne spak our
 host,
 'By-cause drink hath dominacioun
 Upon this man, by my savacioun
 I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.
 For, were it wyn, or old or moysty
 ale, 60
 That he hath dronke, he speketh in his
 nose,
 And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the
 pose.
 He hath also to do more than y-nough
 To kepe him and his capel out of slough;
 And, if he falle from his capel eft-
 sone, 65
 Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,
 In lifting up his hevly dronken cors.
 Telle on thy tale, of him make I no fors.
 But yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to
 nyce,
 Thus openly repreve him of his vyce. 70
 Another day he wol, peraventure,
 Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure;
 I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,
 As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
 That wer not honeste, if it cam to
 preef.' 75
 'No,' quod the maunciple, 'that were
 a greet mescheef!
 So mighte he lightly bringe me in the
 snare.
 Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare
 Which he rit on, than he sholde with me
 stryve;

I wol nat wratthe him, al-so mote I
 thryve! 80
 That that I spak, I seyde it in my
 bourde;
 And wite ye what? I have heer, in a
 gourde,
 A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape,
 And right anon ye shul seen a good
 lape.
 This cook shal drinke ther-of, if I
 may; 85
 Up payne of deeth, he wol nat seye me
 nay!
 And certainly, to tellen as it was,
 Of this vessel the cook drank faste,
 allas!
 What neded him? he drank y-nough
 biforn.
 And whan he hadde pouped in this
 horn, 90
 To the maunciple he took the gourde
 agayn;
 And of that drinke the cook was wonder
 fayn,
 And thanked him in swich wyse as he
 coude.
 Than gan our host to laughen wonder
 loude,
 And seyde, 'I see wel, it is necessarie, 95
 Wher that we goon, good drink we with
 us carie;
 For that wol turne rancour and disese
 Tacord and love, and many a wrong
 apese.
 O thou Bachus, y-blessed be thy name,
 That so canst turnen earnest in-to game!
 Worship and thank be to thy deitee! 101
 Of that matere ye gete na-more of me.
 Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye.'
 'Wel, sir,' quod he, 'now herkneth
 what I seye.'

Thus endeth the Prologe of the Maunciple.

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Maunciples Tale of
 the Crowe.*

WHAN Phebus dwelled here in this erthe
 adoun, 105
 As olde bokes maken mencion,

He was the moste lusty bachiler
 In al this world, and eek the beste
 archer;
 He slow Phitoun, the serpent, as he lay
 Slepinge agayn the sonne upon a
 day; 110

And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bowe wroughte, as men may
rede.

Pleyen he coude on every minstralceye,
And singen, that it was a melodye,
To heren of his clere vois the soun. 115
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphion,
That with his singing walled that citee,
Coude never singen half so wel as he.
Therto he was the semelieste man
That is or was, sith that the world
bigan. 120

What nedeth it his fetures to discryve?
For in this world was noon so fair on
lyve.

He was ther-with fulfild of gentillesse,
Of honour, and of parfit worthinesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachel-
rye, 125

As wel in fredom as in chivalrye,
For his desport, in signe eek of victorie
Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,
Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a
crowe, 130

Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
And taughte it speken, as men teche a
lay.

Whyt was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt
swan,

And countrefete the speche of every man
He coude, whan he sholde telle a
tale. 135

Ther-with in al this world no nightingale
Ne coude, by an hondred thousand deel,
Singen so wonder merily and weel.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a
wyf, 139

Which that he lovede more than his lyf,
And night and day dide ever his dili-
gence

Hir for to plesse, and doon hir reverence,
Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,
Ialous he was, and wolde have kept hir
fayn;

For him were looth by-iaped for to
be. 145

And so is every wight in swich degree;
But al in ydel, for it availleth noght.

A good wyf, that is clene of work and
thoght,

Sholde nat been kept in noon await, cer-
tain;

And trewely, the labour is in vayn 150
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol nat be.
This holde I for a verray nycetee,
To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lyves.

But now to purpos, as I first bigan: 155
This worthy Phebus dooth all that he
can

To plesen hir, weninge by swich ple-
saunce,

And for his manhede and his gover-
naunce,

That no man sholde han put him from
hir grace.

But god it woot, ther may no man em-
brace 160

As to destreyne a thing, which that na-
ture

Hath naturelly set in a creature.

Tak any brid, and put it in a cage,
And do al thyn entente and thy corage
To fostre it tendrely with mete and
drinke, 165

Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,
And keep it al-so clenly as thou may;

Al-though his cage of gold be never so
gay,

Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand
fold,

Lever in a forest, that is rude and cold,
Gon ete wormes and swich wrecched-
nesse. 171

For ever this brid wol doon his bisinesse
To escape out of his cage, if he may;

His libertee this brid desireth ay.

Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with
milk, 175

And tendre flesh, and make his couche
of silk,

And lat him seen a mous go by the wal;
Anon he weyveth milk, and flesh, and al,

And every deyntee that is in that hous,
Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous.

Lo, here hath lust his dominacioun, 181
And appetyt flemeth discrecioun.

A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;
The lewedeste wolf that she may finde,

Or leest of reputacion wol she take, 185
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.

Alle these ensamples speke I by these
men

That been untrewes, and no-thing by
wommen.

For men han ever a likerous appetyt
On lower thing to parfourne hir delyt 190
Than on hir wyves, be they never so
faire,

Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,
That we ne conne in no-thing han ple-
saunce

That souneth in-to vertu any whyle. 195
This Phebus, which that thoghte upon
no gyle,

Deceyved was, for al his Iolitee;
For under him another hadde she,
A man of litel reputacioun, 199
Noght worth to Phebus in comparisoun.
The more harm is; it happeth ofte so,
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and
wo.

And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,
His wyf anon bath for hir lemman sent,
Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavish
speche! 205

Foryeveth it me, and that I yow biseche.
The wyse Plato seith, as ye mey rede,
The word mot nede accorde with the
dede.

If man shal telle proprely a thing,
The word mot cosin be to the werking.
I am a boistous man right thus, seye I,
Ther nis no difference, trewely, 212

Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,
If of hir body dishonest she be,
And a povre wenche, other than this —
If it so be, they werke bothe amis — 216

But that the gentile, in estaat above,
She shal be cleped his lady, as in love;
And for that other is a povre womman,
She shal be cleped his wenche, or his
lemman. 220

And, god it woot, myn owene dere
brother,
Men leyn that oon as lowe as lyth that
other.

Right so, bitwixe a titleles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or a thief erraunt, 224
The same I seye, ther is no difference.
To Laundre told was this sentence;
That, for the tyrant is of gretter might,
By force of meynee for to sleen doun-
right,

And brennen hous and hoom, and make
al plain,
Lo! therfor is he cleped a capitain; 230

And, for the outlawe hath but smal
meynee,
And may nat doon so greet an harm as
he,

Ne bringe a contree to so greet mes-
cheef,

Men clepen him an outlawe or a thief.
But, for I am a man noght textuel, 235
I wol noght telle of textes never a del;
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir
lemman,

Anon they wroghten al hir lust volage.
The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the
cage, 240

Biheld hir werk, and seyde never a word.
And whan that hoom was come Phebus,
the lord,

This crowe sang 'cokkow! cokkow!
cokkow!'

'What, brid?' quod Phebus, 'what
song singestow?

Ne were thow wost so merily to singe
That to myn herte it was a reioisinge 246
To here thy vois? allas! what song is
this?'

'By god,' quod he, 'I singe nat amis;
Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthi-
nesse, 249

For al thy beautee and thy gentilesse,
For al thy song and al thy minstralcye,
For al thy waiting, blered is thyn yē

With oon of litel reputacioun,
Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun,
The mountance of a gnat; so mote I
thryve! 255

For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh him
swyve.'

What wol ye more? the crowe anon
him tolde,

By sadde tokens and by wordes bolde,
How that his wyf had doon hir lecherye,
Him to gret shame and to gret vileinye;
And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his
yēn. 261

This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,
Him thoughte his sorweful herte brast
a-two;

His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a
flo,

And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he
slayn. 265

This is theffect, ther is na-more to sayn;

For sorwe of which he brak his minstral-
cye,
Bothe harpe, and lute, and giterne, and
sautrye;
And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe.
And after that, thus spak he to the
crowe: 270
'Traitor,' quod he, 'with tonge of
scorpioun,
Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!
Allas! that I was wrought! why nere I
deed?
O dere wyf, o gemme of lustiheed,
That were to me so sad and eek so
trewe, 275
Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,
Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, y-wis!
O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!
O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,
That unavysed smytest giltelees! 280
O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun,
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,
Ne trowe no-thing with-outhe strong
witness;
Smyt nat to sone, er that we witen why,
And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly 286
Er ye doon any execucioun,
Up-on your ire, for suspecioun.
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the
mire. 290
Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!
And to the crowe, 'o false theef!'
seyde he,
'I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!
Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale;
Now shaltow, false theef, thy song for-
gon, 295
And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon,
Ne never in al thy lyf ne shaltow speke.
Thus shal men on a traitour been
awreke;
Thou and thyn of-spring ever shul be
blake,
Ne never swete noise shul ye make, 300
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,
In tokeninge that thurgh thee my wyf is
slayn.'
And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,
And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon,
And made him blak, and refte him al his
song, 305

And eek his speche, and out at dore him
slong
Un-to the devel, which I him bitake;
And for this caas ben alle crowes
blake. —
Lordings, by this ensample I yow
preye,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what I
seye: 310
Ne telleth never no man in your lyf
How that another man hath dight his
wyf;
He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.
Daun Salomon, as wyse clerkes seyn,
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge
wel; 315
But as I seyde, I am noght texuel.
But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame:
'My sone, think on the crowe, a goddes
name;
My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep
thy freend.
A wikked tonge is worse than a feend.
My sone, from a feend men may hem
blesse; 321
My sone, god of his endeles goodnesse
Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,
For man sholde him avyse what he speke.
My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,
Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes
teche; 326
But for a litel speche avysely
Is no men shent, to speke generally.
My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne
At alle tyme, but whan thou doost thy
peyne 330
To speke of god, in honour and preyere.
The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt lere,
Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge. —
Thus lerne children whan that they ben
yonge. —
My sone, of muchel speking yvel-avysed,
Ther lasse speking hadde y-nough suf-
fysed, 336
Comth muchel harm, thus was me told
and taught.
In muchel speche sinne wanteth naught.
Wostow wher-of a rakel tonge serveth?
Right as a swerd forcutteth and for-
kerveth 340
An arm a-two, my dere sone, right so
A tonge cutteth frendship al a-two.
A langler is to god abhominable;

Reed Salomon, so wys and honorable;
 Reed David in his psalmes, reed Sen-
 ekke. 345
 My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed
 thou bekke.
 Dissimule as thou were deaf, if that thou
 here
 A Iangler speke of perilous matere.
 The Fleming seith, and lerne it, if thee
 leste,
 That litel Iangling causeth muchel
 reste. 350
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast
 seyde,
 Thee thar nat drede for to be biwreyd;
 But he that hath misseyd, I dar wel
 sayn,

He may by no wey clepe his word
 agayn.
 Thing that is seyde, is seyde; and forth it
 gooth, 355
 Though him repente, or be him leef or
 looth.
 He is his thral to whom that he hath
 sayd
 A tale, of which he is now yvel apayd.
 My sone, be war, and be non auctour
 newe
 Of tydinges, whether they ben false or
 trewe. 360
 Wher-so thou come, amonges hye or
 lowe,
 Kepe wel thy tonge, and think up-on
 the crowe.

Here is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

GROUP I.

THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.

*Here foloweth the Prologe of the Persones
 Tale.*

By that the maunciple hadde his tale al
 ended,
 The sonne from the south lyne was de-
 scended
 So lowe, that he nas nat, to my sighte,
 Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte.
 Foure of the klokke it was tho, as I
 gesse; 5
 For eleven foot, or litel more or lesse,
 My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there,
 Of swich feet as my lengthe parted were
 In six feet equal of proporcioun.
 Ther-with the mones exaltacioun, 10
 I mene Libra, alwey gan ascende,
 As we were entringe at a thropes ende;
 For which our host, as he was wont to
 gye,
 As in this caas, our Ioly companye,
 Seyde in this wyse, 'lordings everich-
 oon, 15
 Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon.
 Fulfild is my sentence and my decree;
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.

Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce;
 I prey to god, so yeve him right good
 chaunce, 20
 That telleth this tale to us lustily.
 Sir preest,' quod he, 'artow a vicary?
 Or art a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our
 pley;
 For every man, save thou, hath told his
 tale, 25
 Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy
 male;
 For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,
 Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet
 matere.
 Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'
 This Personne him answerde, al at
 ones, 30
 'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me;
 For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,
 Repreveth hem that weyven soothfast-
 nesse,
 And tellen fables and swich wrecched-
 nesse.
 Why sholde I sowen draf out of my
 fest, 35

Whan I may sowen whete, if that me
lest?
For which I seye, if that yow list to
here
Moralitee and vertuuous matere,
And thanne that ye wol yeve me audi-
ence,
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence, 40
Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,
I can nat geste — rum, ram, ruf — by
lettre,
Ne, god, wot, rym holde I but litel
bette;
And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat glose. 45
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose
To knitte up al this feeste, and make an
ende.
And Iesu, for his grace, wit me sende
To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage 50
That highte Ierusalem celestial.
And, if ye vouche-sauf, anon I shal
Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye
Telle your avys, I can no better seye.
But natheles, this meditacioun 55

Explicit prohemium.

I putte it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes, for I am nat textuel;
I take but the sentens, trusteth wel.
Therfor I make protestacioun
That I wol stonde to correccioun.' 60
Up-on this word we han assented
sone,
For, as us semed, it was for to done,
To enden in som vertuuous sentence,
And for to yeve him space and audi-
ence;
And bede our host he sholde to him
seye, 65
That alle we to telle his tale him preye.
Our host hadde the wordes for us
alle:—
'Sir preest,' quod he, 'now fayre yow
bifalle!
Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly
here'—
And with that word he seyde in this
manere— 70
'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun.
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun;
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel god sende yow his grace!'

THE PERSONES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE PERSONES
TALE.

*Ier. 6°. State super vias et videte
et interrogate de viis antiquis, que
sit via bona; et ambulate in ea, et
inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.*

§ I. Our swete lord god of hevene,
that no man wole perisse, but wole
that we comen alle to the knowel-
eche of him, and to the blisful lyf
75 that is perdurable, / amonesteth us by
the prophete Ieremie, that seith in
this wyse: / 'stondeþ upon the
weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde
pathes (that is to seyn, of olde sen-
tences) which is the goode wey; /

and walketh in that wey, and ye shul
finde refresshinge for your soules,
&c. / Manye been the weyes espir-
ituels that leden folk to oure Lord
Iesu Crist, and to the regne of glorie. /
Of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble
wey and a ful covenable, which may
nat faile to man ne to womman, that
thurgh sinne hath misgoon fro the
righte wey of Ierusalem celestial; / 80
and this wey is cleped Penitence, of
which man sholde gladly herknen and
enquere with al his herte; / to witen
what is Penitence, and whennes it is
cleped Penitence, and in how manye
maneres been the accions or werk-
inges of Penitence, / and how manye
spyees ther been of Penitence, and
whiche thir ges apertenen and bihoven

to Penitence, and whiche thinges de-
stourben Penitence. /

§ 2. Seint Ambrose seith, that
'Penitence is the pleyning of man
for the gilt that he hath doon, and
na-more to do any thing for which
him oghte to pleyne.' / And som
doctour seith: 'Penitence is the way-
mentinge of man, that sorweth for his
sinne and pyneth him-self for he hath
85 misdoon.' / Penitence, with certeyne
circumstances, is verrey repentance of
a man that halt him-self in sorwe and
other payne for hise giltes. / And
for he shal be verrey penitent, he shal
first biwailen the sinnes that he hath
doon, and stidefastly purposen in his
herte to have shrift of mouthe, and to
doon satisfaccioun, / and never to
doon thing for which him oghte more
to biwayle or to compleyne, and to
continue in goode werkes: or elles
his repentance may nat availle. /
For as seith seint Isidre: 'he is a
Iaper and a gabber, and no verrey
repentant, that eftsoone dooth thing,
for which him oghte repente.' /
90 Wepinge, and nat for to stinte to
doon sinne, may nat avaylle. / But
nathelees, men shal hope that every
tyme that man falleth, be it never so
ofte, that he may arise thurgh Peni-
tence, if he have grace: but certainly
it is greet doute. / For as seith Seint
Gregorie: 'unnethe aryseth he out of
sinne, that is charged with the charge
of yvel usage.' / And therefore repen-
tant folk, that stinte for to sinne,
and forlete sinne er that sinne forlete
hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker
of hir savacioun. / And he that sin-
neth, and verrailly repenteth him in
his laste ende, holy chirche yet hopeth
his savacioun, by the grete mercy of
oure lord Iesu Crist, for his repen-
tance; but tak the siker wey. /

§ 3. And now, sith I have declared
yow what thing is Penitence, now shul
ye understonde that ther been three
95 accions of Penitence. / The firste ac-
cion of Penitence is, that a man be
baptized after that he hath sinned. /
Seint Augustin seith: 'but he be

penitent for his olde sinful lyf, he may
nat biginne the newe clene lif.' / For
certes, if he be baptized withouten
penitence of his olde gilt, he receiv-
eth the mark of baptisme, but nat the
grace ne the remission of his sinnes,
til he have repentance verrey. / An-
other defaute is this, that men doon
deedly sinne after that they han re-
ceived baptisme. / The thridde de-
faute is, that men fallen in venial
sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to
day. / Ther-of seith Seint Augustin, 100
that 'penitence of goode and humble
folk is the penitence of every day.' /

§ 4. The spyces of Penitence been
three. That oon of hem is solempne,
another is commune, and the thridde
is privee. / Tilke penance that is
solempne, is in two maneres; as to be
put out of holy chirche in lente, for
slaughtre of children, and swich
maner thing. / Another is, whan a
man hath sinned openly, of which
sinne the fame is openly spoken in
the contree; and thanne holy chirche
by Iugement destreinemeth him for to
do open penaunce. / Commune pena-
unce is that preestes enioinen men
comunly in certeyn caas; as for to
goon, peraventure, naked in pilgrim-
ages, or bare-foot. / Privee penaunce 105
is tilke that men doon alday for
privee sinnes, of whiche we shryve
us prively and receyve privee pen-
aunce. /

§ 5. Now shaltow understande
what is bihovely and necessarie to
verrey parfit Penitence. And this
stant on three thinges; / Contricioun
of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and
Satisfaccioun. / For which seith Seint
Iohn Crisostom: 'Penitence destreyn-
eth a man to accepte benignely every
payne that him is enioyned, with
contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth,
with satisfaccion; and in werkinge
of alle maner humilitee.' / And this
is fruitful Penitence agayn three
things in whiche we wrattheoure
lord Iesu Crist: / this is to seyn, by 110
delyt in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse
in spekinge, and by wikked sinful

werkinge. / And agayns this wikkede giltes is Penitence, that may be lykned un-to a tree. /

§ 6. The rote of this tree is Contricion, that hydeth him in the herte of him that is verray repentant, right as the rote of a tree hydeth him in the erthe. / Of the rote of Contricion springeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaccion. / For which Crist seith in his gospel: 'dooth digne fruit of Penitence'; for by this fruit may men knowe this tree, and nat by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the braunches ne by the leves
115 of Confession. / And therefore oure Lord Iesu Crist seith thus: 'by the fruit of hem ye shul knowen hem.' / Of this rote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is moder of sikernesse, and this seed is egre and hoot. / The grace of this seed springeth of god, thurgh remembrance of the day of dome and on the peynes of helle. / Of this matere seith Salomon, that 'in the drede of god man forleteth his sinne.' / The hete of this seed is the love of god, and the desiring of the Ioye perdurable. /
120 This hete draweth the herte of a man to god, and dooth him haten his sinne. / For soothly, ther is nothing that savoureth so wel to a child as the milk of his norice, ne no-thing is to him more abhominable than thilke milk when it is medled with other mete. / Right so the sinful man that loveth his sinne, him semeth that it is to him most swete of any-thing; / but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly our lord Iesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nis to him no-thing more abhominable. / For soothly, the lawe of god is the love of god; for which David the prophete seith: 'I have loved thy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate'; he that loveth god kepeth his
125 lawe and his word. / This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, up-on the avision of the king Nabugodonosor, whan he conseiled him to do

penitence. / Penance is the tree of lyf to hem that it receiven, and he that holdeth him in verray penitence is blessed; after the sentence of Salomon. /

§ 7. In this Penitence or Contricion man shal understonde foure thinges, that is to seyn, what is Contricion: and whiche been the causes that moeven a man to Contricion: and how he sholde be contrit: and what Contricion availleth to the soule. / Thanne is it thus: that Contricion is the verray sorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his sinnes, with sad purpos to shryve him, and to do penance, and nevermore to do sinne. / And this sorwe shal been in this manere, as seith seint Bernard: 'it shal been hevvy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poinant in herte.' /
130 First, for man hath agilt his lord and his creatour; and more sharpe and poinant, for he hath agilt his fader celestial; / and yet more sharpe and poinant, for he hath wrathed and agilt him that boghte him; which with his precious blood hath delivered us fro the bondes of sinne, and fro the crueltee of the devel and fro the peynes of helle. /

§ 8. The causes that oghte moeve a man to Contricion been six. First, a man shal remembre him of hise sinnes; / but loke he that thilke remembrance ne be to him no delyt by no wey, but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob seith: 'sinful men doon werkes worthy of Confession.' / And therefore seith Ezechie: 'wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitternesse of myn herte.' / And god seith
135 in the Apocalips: 'remembreth yow fro whennes that ye been falle'; for bifrom that tyme that ye sinned, ye were the children of god, and limes of the regne of god; / but for your sinne ye been woxen thral and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaundre of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fyr of helle. / And yet more foul and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound

that retourneth to eten his spewing. /
 And yet be ye fouler for your longe
 continuing in sinne and your sinful
 usage, for which ye be roten in your
 sinne, as a beest in his dong. / Swiche
 manere of thoughtes maken a man to
 have shame of his sinne, and no delyt,
 140 as god seith by the prophete Ezechiel. /
 'Ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes,
 and they shuln displese yow.' Sothly,
 sinnes been the weyes that leden folk
 to helle. /

§ 9. The seconde cause that oghte
 make a man to have desdeyn of sinne
 is this: that, as seith seint Peter,
 'who-so that doth sinne is thral of
 sinne'; and sinne put a man in greet
 thraldom. / And therefore seith the
 prophete Ezechiel: 'I wente sorweful
 in desdayn of my-self.' And certes,
 wel oghte a man have desdayn of
 sinne, and withdrawe him from that
 thraldom and vileinye. / And lo,
 what seith Seneca in this matere. He
 seith thus: 'though I wiste that neither
 god ne man ne sholde nevere knowe
 it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to
 do sinne.' / And the same Seneca
 also seith: 'I am born to gretter
 things than to be thral to my body,
 or than for to maken of my body a
 145 thral.' / Ne a fouler thral may no
 man ne womman maken of his body,
 than for to yeven his body to sinne. /
 Al were it the fouleste cherl, or the
 fouleste womman that liveth, and
 leest of value, yet is he thanne more
 foule and more in servitude. / Evere
 fro the hyer degree that man falleth,
 the more is he thral, and more to god
 and to the world vile and abhominable.
 / O gode god, wel oghte man
 have desdayn of sinne; sith that,
 thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now
 is he makid bonde. / And therefore
 seyth Seint Augustin: 'if thou hast
 desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or
 sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that
 150 thou thy-self sholdest do sinne.' /
 Take reward of thy value, that thou
 ne be to foul to thy-self. / Allas!
 wel oghten they thanne have desdayn
 to been servauntz and thralles to

sinne, and sore been ashamed of
 hem-self, / that god of his endeless
 goodnesse hath set hem in heigh es-
 taat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of
 body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, /
 and boghte hem fro the deeth with
 his herte blood, that they so un-
 kindly, agayns his gentillesse, quyten
 him so vileinsly, to slaughtre of hir
 owene soules. / O gode god, ye
 women that been of so greet
 beautee, remembreth yow of the
 proverbe of Salomon, that seith: / 155
 'he lyketh a fair womman, that
 is a fool of hir body, lyk to a ring
 of gold that were in the groyn of a
 sowe.' / For right as a sowe wroteth
 in everich ordure, so wroteth she hir
 beautee in the stinkinge ordure of
 sinne. /

§ 10. The thridde cause that oghte
 moeve a man to Contricion, is drede
 of the day of dome, and of the horri-
 ble peynes of helle. / For as seint
 Ierome seith: 'at every tyme that me
 remembreth of the day of dome, I
 quake; / for whan I ete or drinke,
 or what-so that I do, evere semeth
 me that the trompe sowneth in myn
 ere: / riseth up, ye that been dede, 160
 and cometh to the Iugement.' / O
 gode god, muchel oghte a man to
 drede swich a Iugement, 'ther-as we
 shullen been alle,' as seint Poul seith,
 'biforn the sete of oure lord Iesu
 Crist'; / wher-as he shal make a
 general congregacion, wher-as no
 man may been absent. / For certes,
 there availleth noon essoyne ne excu-
 sacion. / And nat only that oure de-
 fautes shullen be iuged, but eek that
 alle oure werkes shullen openly be
 knowe. / And as seith Seint Ber- 165
 nard: 'ther ne shal no pleding
 availle, ne no sleighte; we shullen
 yeven rekeninge of everich ydel
 word.' / Ther shul we han a Iuge
 that may nat been deceived ne cor-
 rupt. And why? For, certes, alle
 our thoughtes been discovered as to
 him; ne for preyere ne for mede he
 shal nat been corrupt. / And there-
 fore seith Salomon: 'the wratthe of

god ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yifte'; and therefore, at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape. / Wherefore, as seith Seint Anselm: 'ful greet angwissh shul the sinful folk have at that tyme; / ther shal the sterne and wrothe Iuge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open to destroyen him that moot biknowen hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly been shewed biforn god and biforn every
170 creature. / And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules to the pyne of helle. / And with-inne the hertes of folk shal be the bytinge conscience, and with-out-forth shal be the world al brenninge. / Whider shal thanne the wrecched sinful man flee to hyden him? Certes, he may nat hyden him; he moste come forth and shewen him.' / For certes, as seith seint Ierome: 'the erthe shal casten him out of him, and the see also; and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder-clappes and lightnings.' / Now sothly, who-so wel remembreth him of these thinges, I gesse that his sinne shal nat turne
175 for drede of the peyne of helle. / And therefore seith Iob to god: 'suffre, lord, that I may a while biwaille and wepe, er I go with-oute returning to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of death; / to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadwe of death; where-as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste.' / Lo, here may ye seen that Iob preyde respyt a while, to biwepe and waille his trespas; for soothly oon day of respyt is bettre than al the tresor of the world. / And for-as-muche as a man may acquiten him-self biforn god by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therefore sholde he preyde to god to yeve him respyt a while, to biwepe and biwailen his trespas. / For certes, al the sorwe that a man

mighte make fro the beginning of the world, nis but a litel thing at regard of the sorwe of helle. / The cause
180 why that Iob clepeth helle 'the lond of derknesse'; / under-stondeth that he clepeth it 'londe' or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille; 'derk,' for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material. / For certes, the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth him to the horrible develes that him tormenten. / 'Covered with the derknesse of death': that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of god; for certes, the sighte of god is the lyf perdurable. / 'The derknesse of death' been the sinnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben him to see the face of god; right as doth a derk cloude bitwixe us and the sonne. / 'Lond of
185 misese': by-cause that ther been three maneres of defautes, agayn three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lyf, that is to seyn, honours, delycles, and richesses. / Agayns honour, have they in helle shame and confusion. / For wel ye woot that men clepen 'honour' the reverence that man doth to man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence. For certes, na-more reverence shal be doon there to a king than to a knave. / For which god seith by the prophete Ieremye: 'thilke folk that me despysen shul been in despyt.' / 'Honour' is eek cleped greet lordshipe; ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment. 'Honour' is eek cleped greet dignitee and heighnesse; but in helle shul they been al fortroden of develes. / And god seith: 'the
190 horrible develes shulle goon and comen up-on the hevedes of the dampned folk.' And this is for-as-muche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the more shulle they been abated and defouled in helle. / Agayns the richesses of this world, shul they han misese of pov-

erte; and this poverte shal been in foure thinges: / in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith; 'the riche folk, that embraceden and oneden al hir herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepinge of deeth; and no-thing ne shul they finden in hir handes of al hir tresor.' / And more-over, the miseise of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke. / For god seith thus by Moyses; 'they shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hir drinke, and the venim of the dragon hir morsels.' / And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of clothing: for they shulle be naked in body as of clothing, save the fyr in which they brenne and other filthes; / and naked shul they been of soule, of alle manere vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Where been thanne the gaye robes and the softe shetes and the smale shertes? / Lo, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye: 'that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir covertures shulle been of wormes of helle.' / And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of freendes; for he nis nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend; / for neither god ne no creature shal been freend to hem, and everich of hem shal haten other with deedly hate. / 'The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen agayns fader and mooder, and kinrede agayns kinrede, and chyden and despysen everich of hem other,' bothe day and night, as god seith by the prophete Michias. / And the lovinge children, that whylom loveden so fleshly everich other, wolden everich of hem eten other if they mighte. / For how sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem other in the prosperitee of this lyf? / For truste wel, hir fleshly love was deedly hate; as seith the prophete David: 'who-so

that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule.' / And who-so hateth his owene soule, certes, he may love noon other wight in no manere. / And therefore, in helle is no solas ne no friendshipe, but evere the more fleshly kinredes that been in helle, the more cursinges, the more chydinges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. / And forther-over, they shul have defaute of alle manere delyces; for certes, delyces been after the appetytes of the fyve wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinge, savoringe, and touchinge. / But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therefore ful of teres; and hir heringe, ful of waymentinge and of grintinge of teeth, as seith Iesu Crist; / hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stinkinge stink. And as seith Isaye the prophete: 'hir savoring shal be ful of bitter galle.' / And touchinge of al hir body, y-covered with 'fyr that nevere shal quenche, and with wormes that nevere shul dyen,' as god seith by the mouth of Isaye. / And for- as-muche as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir death flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Iob, that seith: 'ther-as is the shadwe of deeth.' / Certes, a shadwe hath the lyknesse of the thing of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thing of which it is shadwe. / Right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the horrible anguiss, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholde dye anon; but certes they shal nat dye. / For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'to wrecche caytives shal be deeth with-oute deeth, and ende with-uten ende, and defaute with-oute failinge. / For hir deeth shal alway liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille.' / And therefore seith Seint Iohn the Evangelist: 'they shullen folwe deeth, and they shul nat finde him; and they shul desyren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem.' / And eek Iob seith: that 'in helle is

noon ordre of rule.' / And al-be-it so that god hath creat alle thinges in right ordre, and no-thing with-ouen ordre, but alle thinges been ordeyned and nombred; yet natheles they that been dampned been no-thing in ordre, ne holden noon ordre. / For the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit. / For, as the prophete David seith: 'god shal destroie the fruit of the erthe as fro hem;' ne water ne shal yeve hem no moisture; ne the eyr no refresshing, ne fyr no light. / For as seith seint Basile: 'the brenninge of the fyr of this world shal god yeven in helle to hem that been dampned; / but the light and the cleernesse shal be yeven in hevене to hise children'; right as the gode man yeveth flesh to hise children, and bones to hise houndes. / And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith seint Job atte laste: that 'ther shal horroure and grisly drede dwellen with-ouen ende.' / Horrour is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned. And therefore han they lorn al hir hope, for sevene causes. / First, for god that is hir Iuge shal be with-ouen mercy to hem; ne they may nat plesse him, ne noon of hise halwes; ne they may yeve no-thing for hir raunson; / ne they have no vois to speke to him; ne they may nat flee fro peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they mowe shewe to delivere hem fro peyne. / And therefore seith Salomon: 'the wikked man dyeth; and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne.' / Who-so thanne wolde wel understande these peynes, and bithinke him weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his sinnes, certes, he sholde have more talent to syken and to wepe than for to singen and to pleye. / For as that seith Salomon: 'who-so that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establised and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe.' / 'Thilke science,' as seith seint Au-

gustin, 'maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.' /

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§ 11. The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in earthe; and eek the good that he hath lorn. / Soothly, the gode werkes that he hath left, outhere they been the gode werkes that he wroughte er he fel in-to deedly sinne, or elles the gode werkes that he wroughte while he lay in sinne. / Soothly, the gode werkes, that he dide biforn that he fil in sinne, been al mortified and astoned and dulled by the ofte sinning. / The othere gode werkes, that he wroughte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrely dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevене. / Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe nevere quiken agayn with-ouen verrey penitence. / And ther-of seith god, by the mouth of Ezechiel: that, 'if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he live?' / Nay; for alle the gode werkes that he hath wrought ne shul nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his sinne. / And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus: 'that we shulle understonde this principally; / that whan we doon deedly sinne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawn in-to memorie the gode werkes that we han wrought biforn.' / For certes, in the werkinge of the deedly sinne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn; that is to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf perdurable in hevене. / But natheles, the gode werkes quiken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, and availen to have the lyf perdurable in hevене, whan we han contricion. / But soothly, the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly sinne, for-as-muche as they were doon in deedly sinne, they may nevere quiken agayn. / For certes,

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thing that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quikene; and nathelees, albe-it that they ne availle nought to han the lyf perdurable, yet availen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles that god wole the rather enlumine and lightne the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; / and eek they availen for to usen a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend
 245 have the lasse power of his soule. / And thus the curteis lord Iesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost; for in somewhat it shal availle. / But for-as-muche as the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in good lyf, been al mortified by sinne followinge; and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in dedly synne, been outrelly dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; / wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song: "*lay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.*" / For certes, sinne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. / For soothly, the grace of the holy goost fareth lyk fyr, that may nat been ydel; for fyr failleth anon as it forleteth his workinge, and right so grace fayleth anon
 250 as it forleteth his werkinge. / Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is bihight to gode men that labouren and werken. / Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyf. / For trust wel, 'he shal yeven acountes,' as seith seint Bernard, 'of alle the godes that han be yeven him in this present lyf, and how he hath hem depended; / in so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekening.' /

§ 12. The fifthe thing that oghte

moeve a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Iesu Crist suffred for our sinnes. / 255
 For, as seith seint Bernard: 'whyl that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travailles that oure lord Crist suffred in preching; / his wearinesse in travailling, hise temptacions whan he fasted, hise longe wakings whan he preyde, hise teres whan that he weep for pitee of good peple; / the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to him; of the foule spitting that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men yaven him, of the foule mowes, and of the reprevs that men to him seyden; / of the nayles with whiche he was nailed to the croys, and of al the remenant of his passion that he suffred for my sinnes, and no-thing for his gilt.' / And ye shul understonde, that in mannes sinne is every manere of ordre or ordinance turned up-so-doun. / 260
 For it is sooth, that god, and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of these foure things sholde have lordshipe over that other; / as thus: god sholde have lordshipe over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. / But sothly, whan man sinneth, al this ordre or ordinance is turned up-so-doun. / And therefore thanne, for-as-muche as the reson of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to god, that is his lord by right, therefore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. / And why? For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns reson; and by that way leseth reson the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body. / For 265
 right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. / And certes, this disordnance and this rebellion oure lord Iesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herketh in which wyse. / For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, therefore is man worthy to have sorwe and

to be deed. / This suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitraysted of his disciple, and distreynd and bounde, 'so that his blood brast out at every nail of hise handes,' as seith seint Augustin. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therefore is men worthy to have shame; and this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, whan they
 270 spetten in his visage. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel thanne as the caitif body of man is rebel bothe to reson and to sensualitee, therefore is it worthy the deeth. / And this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man upon the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, with-outen greet payne and bitter passion. / And al this suffred Iesu Crist, that nevere forfeted. And therefore resonably may be seyde of Iesu in this manere: 'to muchel am I peyned for the thinges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shend-shipe that man is worthy to have.' / And therefore may the sinful man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard: 'acursed be the bitterness of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitterness.' / For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Iesu Crist ordneyed in diverse thinges, / as thus.
 275 Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitraysted of the devel by covetise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delyces; and yet is it tormented by inpacience of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subieccion of sinne; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. / For this disordinaunce of sinful man was Iesu Crist first bitraysted, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and payne. / Thanne was he biscorned, that only sholde han been honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. / Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels desyren to looke, vileynsly

bispet. / Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. / 280
 Thanne was acompliced the word of Isaye: 'he was wounded for oure misdedes, and defouled for oure felonies.' / Now sith that Iesu Crist took up-on him-self the payne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevене sholde al this payne endure. /

§ 13. The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges; that is to seyn, foryiffnesse of sinne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevене, with which god shal guerdone a man for hise gode dedes. / And for-as-muche as Iesu Crist yeveth us these yiftes of his largesse and of his sovereyn bountee, therefore is he cleped *Iesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum*. / Iesus is to seyn 'saveour' or 'salvacion,' on whom men shul hope to have foryiffnesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvacion of sinnes. / 285
 And therefore seyde the aungel to Ioseph: 'thou shalt clepen his name Iesus, that shal save his peple of hir sinnes.' / And heer-of seith seint Peter: 'ther is noon other name under hevене that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Iesus.' / *Nazarenus* is as muche for to seye as 'florisslinge,' in which a man shal hope, that he that yeveth him remission of sinnes shal yeve him eek grace wel for to do. For in the flour is hope of fruit in tyme cominge; and in foryiffnesse of sinnes hope of grace wel for to do. / 'I was atte dore of thyn herte,' seith Iesus, 'and cleped for to entre; he that openeth to me shal have foryiffnesse of sinne. / I wol entre in-to him by my grace, and soupe with him,' by the goode werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foode of god; 'and he shal soupe with me,' by the grete Ioye that I shal yeven him. / Thus shal man 290
 hope, for hise werkes of penaunce,

that god shall yeven him his regne; as he bihoteh him in the gospel. /

§ 14. Now shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricion. I seye, that it shal been universal and total; this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentant for alle hise sinnes that he hath doon in delyt of his thought; for delyt is ful perilous. / For ther been two manere of consentinges; that oon of hem is cleped consentinge of affeccion, when a man is moeved to do sinne, and delyteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne; / and his reson aperceyveth it wel, that is is sinne agayns the lawe of god, and yet his reson refreyneth nat his foul delyt or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of god; al-though his reson ne consente nocht to doon that sinne in dede, / yet seyn somme doctours that swich delyt that dwelleth longe, it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so
295 lite. / And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of god with perfite consentinge of his reson; for ther-of is no doute, that it is deedly sinne in consentinge. / For certes, ther is no deedly sinne, that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delyt; and so forth in-to consentinge and in-to dede. / Wherefore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delytes, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. / Wherefore I seye, that swiche wikked delytes and wikked thoghtes been subtille bigyleres of hem that shullen be dampned. / More-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes as wel as for hise wikkede dedes; for certes, the repentance of a singuler sinne, and nat repente of alle hise othere sinnes, or elles repenten him of alle hise othere sinnes, and nat of
300 a singuler sinne, may nat availle. / For certes, god almighty is al good; and ther-fore he foryeveth al, or elles right nocht. / And heer-of seith

seint Augustin: 'I woot certainly / that god is enemy to everich sinnere'; and how thanne? He that observeth o sinne, shal he have foryiffnesse of the remenaunt of hise othere sinnes? Nay. / And forther-over, contricion sholde be wonder sorweful and anguissous, and therefore yeveth him god pleylny his mercy; and therefore, when my soule was anguissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of god that my preyere mighte come to him. / Forther-over, contricion moste be continuel, and that man have stedefast purpos to shryven him, and for to amenden him of his lyf. / For
305 soothly, whyl contricion lasteth, man may evere have hope of foryiffnesse; and of this comth hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in him-self, and eek in other folk, at his power. / For which seith David: 'ye that loven god hateth wikkednesse.' For trusteth wel, to love god is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth. /

§ 15. The laste thing that man shal understonde in contricion is this; wher-of avayleth contricion. I seye, that somtyme contricion delivereth a man fro sinne; / of which that David seith: 'I seye,' quod David, that is to seyn, 'I purposed fermely to shryve me; and thow, Lord, relesedest my sinne.' / And right so as contricion availleth nocht, with-uten sad purpos of shrifte, if man have oportunitie, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfaccion with-uten contricion. /
310 And more-over, contricion destroyeth the prison of helle, and maketh wayk and feble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the yiftes of the holy goost and of alle gode vertues; / and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth the soule fro the peyne of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to alle godes espirituels, and to the companye and communion of holy chirche. / And forther-over, it maketh him that whylom was sone of ire to be sone

of grace; and alle these things been proved by holy writ. / And therefore, he that wolde sette his entente to these things, he were ful wys; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to sinne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Iesu Crist, and ther-of doon him hommage. / For soothly, oure swete lord Iesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes soule, a
315 sory song we mighten alle singe. /

Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem.

§ 16. The seconde partie of Penitence is Confession, that is signe of contricion. / Now shul ye understonde what is Confession, and whether it oghte nedes be doon or noon, and whiche thinges been covenable to verray Confession. /

§ 17. First shaltow understonde that Confession is verray shewing of sinnes to the preest; / this is to seyn 'verray,' for he moste confessen him of alle the condicions that bilongen to his sinne, as ferforth as he can. / Al moot be seyde, and no thing excused ne hid ne forwrapped, and noght
320 avaunte him of his gode werkes. / And farther over, it is necessarie to understonde whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encreesen, and whiche they been. /

§ 18. Of the springinge of sinnes seith seint Paul in this wise: that 'right as by a man sinne entred first in-to this world, and thurgh that sinne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred in-to alle men that sinneden.' / And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred in-to this world whan he brak the comaundement of god. / And therefore, he that first was so mighty that he sholde not have dyed, becam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, whether he wolde or noon; and all his progenie in this world that in thilke man sinneden. / Loke that in thestaat of innocence, when Adam

and Eve naked weren in paradys, and no-thing ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, / how that the serpent, that
325 was most wyly of alle othere bestes that god hadde made, seyde to the womman: 'why comaunded god to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree in paradys?' / The womman answerde: 'of the fruit,' quod she, 'of the trees in paradys we feden us; but soothly, of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of paradys, god forbade us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest per-aventure we should dyen.' / The serpent seyde to the womman: 'nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, god woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowinge good and harm.' / The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feding, and fair to the eyen, and delytable to the sighte; she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet; and anon the eyen of hem bothe openedden. / And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breches to hiden hir membres. /
330 There may ye seen that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre; and afterward, the delyt of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve; and after that, the consentinge of resoun, as sheweth here by Adam. / For trust wel, thogh so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, and the flesh hadde delyt in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etinge of the fruit, yet stood he in thestaat of innocence. / Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; for of him fleshly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere. / And whan the soule is put in our body, right anon is contract original sinne; and that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and sinne. / And therefore be we

alle born sones of wratthe and of dampnacion perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which binimeth us the culpe; but for sothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacion, which peyne highte concupiscence. / Whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it maketh him coveite, by covetise of flesh, fleshly sinne, by sighte of hise eyen as to erthely thinges, and covetise of hynesse by pryde of herte. /

§ 19. Now as for to speken of the firste covetise, that is, concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche y-maked and by rightful Iugement of god; / I seye, for-as-muche as man is nat obeisaunt to god, that is his lord, therefore is the flesh to him disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissinge of sinne and occasion of sinne. / Therefore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and mooved in his flesh to sinne. / And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth; it may wel waxe feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god thurgh penitence; / but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal somtyme be mooved in him-self, but-if he were al refreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie or colde drinks. / For lo, what seith seint Paul: 'the flesh coveteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde.' / The same seint Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond (in water by night and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in famine, in thirst, in cold and clothless, and ones stoned almost to the death) / yet seyde he: 'allas! I, caytif man, who shal deliver me fro the prisoun of my caytif body?' / And seint Ierome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where-as he hadde no companye but of wilde bestes, where-as he ne hadde no mete but herbes

and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopen for hete and ny destroyed for cold, / yet seyde 345 he: that 'the brenninge of lecherie boiled in al his body.' / Wherefore I woot wel sikerly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. / Witsesse on Seint Iame the Apostel, that seith: that 'every wight is tempted in his owen concupiscence'; that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasion to be tempted of the norissinge of sinne that is in his body. / And therefore seith Seint Iohn the Evaungelist: 'if that we seyn that we beth with-oute sinne, we deceyve usselve, and trouthe is nat in us.' /

§ 20. Now shal ye understonde in what manere that sinne waxeth or encreseth in man. The firste thing is thilke norissinge of sinne, of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence. / And after that comth 350 the subieccion of the devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fyr of fleshly concupiscence. / And after that, a man bithinketh him whether he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. / And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entysinge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no sinne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feleth he anon a flambe of delyt. / And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen him wel, or elles he wol falle anon in-to consentinge of sinne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place. / And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: 'the feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestion, and I wole hente him by moevynge or stiringe of sinne. I wol departe my pryse or my praye by deliberacion, and my lust shal been accompliced in delyt; I wol drawe my swerd in consentinge: ' / for 355 certes, right as a swerd departeth a thing in two peces, right so consent-

inge departeth god fro man: 'and thanne wol I sleen him with myn hand in dede of sinne'; thus seith the feend. / For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is sinne accompliced by temptacion, by delyt, and by consentinge; and thanne is the sinne cleped actual. /

§ 21. For sothe, sinne is in two maneres; outhere it is venial, or deedly sinne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature more than Iesu Crist oure creatour, thanne is it deedly sinne. And venial synne is it, if man love Iesu Crist lasse than him oghte. / For sothe, the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to god more and more. / And therefore, if a man charge himself with manye swiche venial sinnes, certes, but-if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amense in him al the love that he hath to Iesu Crist; / and in this wise skippeth venial in-to deedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more is he enclined to fallen in-to deedly sinne. / And therefore, let us nat be negligent to discharge us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe seith: that manye smale maken a greet. / And herkne this ensample. A greet wawe of the see comth som-tyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm doth som-tyme the smale dropes of water, that entren thurgh a litel crevace in-to the thurrok, and in-to the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. / And therefore, al-though ther be a difference bitwixe these two causes of drenchinge, algates the ship is dreynt. / Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly sinne, and of anoyouse veniale sinnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he sinneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of god, or more. /

And therefore, the love of every thing, that is nat biset in god ne doon principally for goddes sake, al-though that a man love it lasse than god, yet is it venial sinne; / and deedly sinne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of god, or more. / 'Deedly sinne,' as seith seint Augustin, 'is, whan a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verray sovereyn bountee, that may nat change, and yeveth his herte to thing that may change and flitte'; / and certes, that is every thing, save god of hevене. For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, un-to a creature, certes, as muche of his love as he yeveth to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro god; / and therefore doth he sinne. For he, that is dettour to god, ne yeldeth nat to god al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte. /

§ 22. Now sith man understandeth generally, which is venial sinne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of sinnes whiche that many a man per-aventure ne demeth hem nat sinnes, and ne shryveth him nat of the same thinges; and yet nathelees they been sinnes. / Soothly, as thise clerkes wryten, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the sustenaunce of his body, in certain he dooth sinne. / And eek whan he spekeh more than nedeth, it is sinne. Eke whan he herkneth nat benignely the compleint of the povre. / Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite. / Eke whan he useth his wyf, withouten sovereyn desyr of engendrure, to the honour of god, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body. / Eke whan he wol nat visite 375

the sike and the prisoner, if he may. Eke if he love wyf or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requyreth. Eke if he flater or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee. / Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparailleth his mete more deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse. / Eke if he tale vanitees at chirche or at goddes service, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folye or of vileinye; for he shal yelden accountes of it at the day of dome. / Eke whan he biheth or assureth to do thinges that he may nat perfourne. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his neigebore. / Eke whan he hath any wikked suspencion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no
380 soothfastnesse. / These thinges and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, as seith seint Augustin. /

Now shal men understonde, that al-be-it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge love that he hath to oure lord Iesu Crist, and by preyeres and confession and othere gode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. / For, as seith seint Augustin: 'if a man love god in swiche manere, that al that evere he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of god: / loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anyoeth or greveth, so muche anyoeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Iesu Crist.' / Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthily of the
385 precious body of Iesu Crist; / by receyvinge eek of holy water; by almesdede; by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse and at complin; and by blessinge of bisshopes and of preestes, and by othere gode werkes. /

Explicit secunda pars Penitentie.

Sequitur de Septem Peccatis Mortalibus et eorum dependenciis circumstantiis et speciebus.

§ 23. Now is it bihovely thing to telle whiche been the deedly sinnes; this is to seyn, chieftaines of sinnes; alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chieftaines for-as-muche as they been chief, and springers of alle othere sinnes. / Of the roote of these sevene sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes; for of this rote springen certein braunches, as Ire, Envye, Accidie or Slewthe, Avarice or Coveitise (to commune understandinge), Glotonye, and Lecherye. / And everich of these chief sinnes hath hise braunches and hise twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folwinge.

De Superbia.

§ 24. And thogh so be that no man can outrelly telle the nombre of the twigges and of the harmes that cometh of Pryde, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. /
390 Ther is Inobedience, Avauntinge, Ipocrisie, Despyt, Arrogance, Impudence, Swellinge of herte, Insolence, Elacion, Impacience, Strif, Contumacie, Presumpcion, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie; and many another twig that I can nat declare. / Inobedient, is he that disobeyeth for despyt to the comandements of god and to hise sovereyns, and to his goostly fader. / Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. / Ipo-
395 crite, is he that hydeth to shewe him swiche as he is, and sheweth him swiche as he nocht is. / Despitous, is he that hath desdeyn of his neigebore, that is to seyn, of his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doon that him oghte to do. / Arrogant, is he that
395 thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath nocht, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes; or elles he demeth that he

be that he nis nat. / Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of hise sinnes. / Swellinge of herte, is whan a man reioyseth him of harm that he hath doon. / Insolent, is he that despyseth in his Iugement alle othere folk as to regard of his value, and of his conning, and of his spek-
 400 maister ne felawe. / Impacient, is he that wol nat been y-taught ne undernome of his vyce, and by stryf werreieth trouthe witingly, and defendeth his folye. / *Contumax*, is he that thurgh his indignacion is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sovereyns. / Presampcion, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and that is called Surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour there-as hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be revered. / Pertinacie, is whan man deffendeth his folye, and trusteth to muchel in his owene wit. / Veyne glorie, is for to have pompe and delyt in his temporel hynesse, and glorifie
 405 him in this worldly estaat. / Ianglinge, is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille, and taken no kepe what they seye. /

§ 25. And yet is ther a privee spece of Pryde, that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, per-aventure; and eek he waiteth or desyreth to sitte, or elles to goon above him in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offring biforn his neighebores, / and swiche semblable thinges; agayns his duetee, per-aventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desyr to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple. /

§ 26. Now been ther two maneres of Pryde; that oon of hem is withinne the herte of man, and that other is with-oute. / Of whiche soothly thise forseide thinges, and mo than I have seyde, apertenen to pryde that is

in the herte of man; and that othere spesces of pryde been with-oute. / 410
 But natheles that oon of these spesces of pryde is signe of that other, right as the gaye leafsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the celer. / And this is in manye thinges: as in speche and countenance, and in outrageous array of clothing; / for certes, if ther ne hadde be no sinne in clothing, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. / And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softnesse, and for his strangenesse and degysinesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it. / Allas! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the sinful costlewe array of clothinge, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse? / 415

§ 27. As to the firste sinne, that is in superfluitee of clothinge, which that maketh it so dere, to harm of the peple; / nat only the cost of embroudinge, the degyse endentinge or barringe, oundinge, palinge, windinge, or bendinge, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee; / but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gounes, so muche pounsoninge of chisels to maken holes, so muche dagginge of sheres; / forth-with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gounes, trailinge in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eek on fote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailinge is verrailly as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre; to greet damage of the forseide povre folk. / And that in sondry wyse: this is to seyn, that the more that clooth is wasted, the more it costeth to the peple for the scantnesse; / and forther-over, if so be 420
 that they wolde yeven swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hir estaat, ne suffisant to bete hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro

the distemperance of the firmament. / Upon that other syde, to speken of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as been thise cutted sloppes or hainselins, that thurgh hir shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man, to wikked entente. / Allas! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lyk the maladie of hirnias, in the wrapping of hir hoses; / and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hindre part of a she-ape in the fulle of the mone. / And more-over, the wrecched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degysinge, in departing of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir shameful

425 privee membres weren flayn. / And if so be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whyt and blak, or whyt and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth; / thanne semeth it, as by variance of colour, that half the partie of hir privee membres were corrupt by the fyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or by other swich meschaunce. / Of the hindre part of hir buttokes, it is ful horrible for to see. For certes, in that partie of hir body ther-as they purgen hir stinkinge ordure, / that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despyt of honestetee, the which honestetee that Iesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve. / Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, god woot, that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hir array of atyr likerousnesse and pryde. / I sey nat

430 that honestetee in clothinge of man or womman is uncovenable, but certes the superfluttee or disordinat scantitee of clothinge is reprevable. / Also the sinne of aornement or of appaillie is in thinges that apertenen to rydinge, as in to manye delicat horses that been holden for delyt, that been so faire, fatte, and costlewe; / and also to many a vicious

knave that is sustened by cause of hem; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and brydles covered with precious clothing and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver. / For which god seith by Zakarie the prophete, 'I wol confounde the ryderes of swiche horses.' / This folk taken litel reward of the rydinge of goddes some of hevене, and of his harneys whan he rood up-on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povre clothes of hise disciples; ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other beast. / I speke this for the sinne

435 of superfluttee, and nat for reasonable honestetee, whan reson it requyret. / And forther, certes pryde is greetly notified in holdinge of greet meinee, whan they be of litel profit or of right no profit. / And namely, whan that meinee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardnesse of heigh lordshipe or by wey of offices. / For certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle, whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meinee. / Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the thefte of hir hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. / Thilke manere of folk been

440 the flies that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swiche forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes; / for which thus seith David the prophete, 'wikked deeth mote come up-on thilke lordshipes, and god yeve that they mote descenden in-to helle al doun; for in hir houses ben inquitees and shrewednesses,' and nat god of hevене. / And certes, but-if they doon amendement, right as god yaf his benison to Laban by the service of Iacob, and to Pharao by the service of Ioseph, right so god wol yeve his malison to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servaunts, but-if they come to amendement. / Pryde of the table appereth eek ful ofte; for

certes, riche men been cleped to festes, and povre folk been put away and rebuked. / Also in excesse of diverse metes and drinkes; and namely, swiche manere bake metes and dish-metes, brenninge of wilde fyr, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast; so that it
 445 is abusion for to thinke. / And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of minstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delycles of luxurie, / if so be that he sette his herte the lasse up-on oure lord Iesu Crist, certain it is a sinne; and certainly the delycles mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly falle by hem in-to deedly sinne. / The especes that sourden of pryde, soothly whan they sourden of malice ymaged, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute. / And whan they sourden by freletee unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawen ayein, al been they grevouse synnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly. / Now mighte men axe wher-of that Pryde sourdeth and springeth, and I seye: somtyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, and som-tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som-tyme
 450 of the goodes of grace. / Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhur in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. / Certes, goodes of body been hele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrye, franchise. / Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharp understandyng, subtil engin, vertu naturel, good memorie. / Goodes of fortune been riches, highe degrees of lordshipes, preisinges of the peple. / Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spiritual travaille, benignitee, vertuous contemplacion, withstandinge of
 455 temptacion, and semblable thinges. / Of whiche forseide goodes, certes it is a ful greet folye a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. / Now as for to spoken of goodes of nature, god woot that som-tyme we han

hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. / As, for to spoken of hele of body; certes it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte encheson of the siknesse of oure soule; for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule: and therefore, the more that the body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. / Eke for to pryde him in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye; for certes, the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be: / and, over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardinesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce. / Eek for to pryde him
 460 of his gentrye is ful greet folye; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soule; and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o moder; and alle we been of o nature roten and corrupt, both riche and povre. / For sothe, o manere gentrye is for to preise, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child. / For truste wel, that over what man sinne hath maistrie, he is a verray chert to sinne. /

§ 28. Now been ther generale signes of gentillesse; as eschewing of vyce and ribaudye and servage of sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance; / and usinge vertu, curteisye, and clennessse, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure is folye and sinne. / An-
 465 other is, to remembre him of bountee that he of other folk hath receyved. / Another is, to be benigne to hise goode subgetis; wherfore, as seith Senek, 'ther is no-thing more covenable to a man of heigh estaat than debonairetee and pitee. / And therefore these flies that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir king, they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may stinge.' / Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a

diligent, to attayne to heighe vertuose things. / Now certes, a man to pryde him in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folye; for thilke yiftes of grace that sholde have turned him to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth him to venim and to confu-
 470 sion, as seith seint Gregorie. / Certes also, who-so prydeth him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool; forsom-tyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caitif and a wrecche er it be night: / and somtyme the richesse of a man is cause of his deeth; somtyme the delycles of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. / Certes, the commendacion of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste; this day they preyse, tomorwe they blame. / God woot, desyr to have commendacion of the peple hath caused deeth to many a bisy man. /

*Remedium contra peccatum
Superbie.*

§ 29. Now sith that so is, that ye han understonde what is pryde, and whiche been the speses of it, and whennes pride sourdeth and
 475 springeth; / now shul ye understonde which is the remedie agayns the sinne of pryde, and that is, humilitee or mekenesse. / That is a vertu, thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of him-self, and holdeth of him-self no prys ne deyn-tee as in regard of hise desertes, consideringe evere hise freletee. / Now been ther three maneres of humilitee; as humiltee in herte, and another humilitee in his mouth; the thridde is, in hise werkes. / The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres: that oon is, whan a man holdeth him-self as noght worth biforn god of hevене. Another is whan he ne despyseth noon other man. / The thridde is, whan he rekketh nat thogh men holde him noght worth. The ferthe is, whan he nis nat sory of
 480 his humiliacion. / Also, the humili-tee of mouth is in foure thinges: in

attempree speche, and in humblesse of speche, and whan he biknoweth with his owene mouth that he is swich as him thinketh that he is in his herte. Another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man, and nothing ther-of amenuseth. / Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres: the firste is, whan he putteth othere men biforn him. The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over-al. The thridde is, gladly to assente to good conseil. / The ferthe is, to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereyns, or of him that is in hyer degree; certain, this is a greet werk of humilitee. /

Sequitur de Invidia.

§ 30. After Pryde wol I speken of the foule sinne of Envye, which is, as by the word of the philoso-
 phre, sorwe of other mannes prosperitee; and after the word of seint Augustin, it is sorwe of other mannes wele, and Ioye of other mennes harm. / This foule sinne is platly agayns the holy goost. Al-be-it so that every sinne is agayns the holy goost, yet nathelees, for as muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the holy goost, and Envye comth proprely of malice, therefore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the holy goost. / Now hath malice
 485 two speses, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth nat that he is in sinne, or rekketh nat that he is in sinne; which is the hardnesse of the devel. / That other spece of malice is, whan a man werreyeth trouthe, whan he woot that it is trouthe. And eek, whan he werreyeth the grace that god hath yeve to his neigheboore; and al this is by Envye. / Certes, thanne is Envye the worste sinne that is. For soothly, alle othere sinnes been som-tyme only agayns o special vertu; / but certes, Envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns alle good-

nesses; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebores; and in this manere it is divers from alle othere sinnes. / For wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delyt in itself, save only Envye, that evere hath in itself anguish and sorwe. / The speses of Envye
 490 been thise: ther is first, sorwe of other mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee; and prosperitee is kindly matere of Ioye; thanne is Envye a sinne agayns kinde. / The seconde spece of Envye is Ioye of other mannes harm; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere reioyseth him of mannes harm. / Of thise two speses comth bakbyting; and this sinne of bakbyting or detraction hath certeine speses, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighebores by a wikke entente; / for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a 'but' atte laste ende, that is digne of more blame, than worth is al the preisinge. / The seconde spece is, that if a man be good and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbyter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up-sodoun to his shrewed entente. / The
 495 thridde is, to ameneuse the bountee of his neighebores. / The fourthe spece of bakbyting is this; that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbyter seyn, 'parfey, swich a man is yet bet than he'; in dispreisinge of him that men preise. / The fiftte spece is this; for to consente gladly and herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful greet, and ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbyter. / After bakbyting cometh grucching or murmuracion; and somtyme it springeth of incapience agayns god, and somtyme agayns man. / Agayns god it is, whan a man gruccheth agayn the peynes of helle, or agayns poverte, or los of catel, or agayn reyn or tempest;

or elles gruccheth that shrewes han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han adversitee. / And alle
 500 these thinges sholde men suffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful lugement and ordinance of god. / Som-tyme comth grucching of avarice; as Iudas gruced agayns the Magdaleyne, whan she enoynte the heved of oure lord Iesu Crist with hir precious oynement. / This maner murmure is swich as whan man gruccheth of goodnesse that him-self dooth, or that other folk doon of hir owene catel. / Som-tyme comth murmure of pryde; as whan Simon the Pharisee gruced agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approached to Iesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes. / And somtyme grucching sourdeth of Envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. /
 505 Murmure eek is ofte amonges servaunts, that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon levelful thinges; / and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly withseye the commandements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively for verray despyt; / whiche wordes men clepen the develes *Pater-noster*, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater-noster*, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name. / Som tyme grucching comth of ire or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. / Thanne cometh eek bitternesse of herte; thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighebor semeth to him bitter and unsavory. / Thanne cometh
 510 discord, that unbindeth alle manere of frendshipe. Thanne comth scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. / Thanne comth accusinge, as whan man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe

night and day to accusen us alle. / Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively if he may; / and if he nocht may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous prively, or empoysone or sleen hise bestes, and semblable thinges. /

Remedium contra peccatum Inuidie.

§ 31. Now wol I speke of the remedie agayns this foule sinne of Envye. First, is the love of god principal, and loving of his neighebor as him-self; for soothly, that oon ne may nat been with-oute that other. / And
515 truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebor thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have o fader fleshly, and o moder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve; and eek o fader espirituel, and that is god of hevenc. / Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, and wilne him alle goodnesse; and therefore seith god, 'love thy neighebor as thy-selve,' that is to seyn, to salvacion bothe of lyf and of soule. / And more-over, thou shalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestinge, and chastysinge; and conforten him in hise anoyes, and preye for him with al thyn herte. / And in dede thou shalt love him in swich wyse, that thou shalt doon to him in charitee as thou woldest that it were doon to thyn owene persone. / And therefore, thou ne shalt doon him no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule,
520 by entysing of wikked ensample. / Thou shalt nat desyren his wyf, ne none of hise thinges. Understond eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy. / Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comandement of god; and soothly thy frend shaltow love in God. / I seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for goddes sake, by his comandement. For if it were reson that a man sholde

hate his enemy, for sothe god nolde nat receiven us to his love that been hise enemys. / Agayns three manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym, he shal doon three thinges, as thus. / Agayns hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte. Agayns chydng and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy. And agayn the wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon him bountee. / For
525 Crist seith, 'loveth youre enemys, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm; and eek for hem that yow chacen and pursewen, and doth bountee to hem that yow haten.' Lo, thus comaundeth us oure lord Iesu Crist, to do to oure enemys. / For soothly, nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and parfey, oure enemys han more nede to love than oure freendes; and they that more nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse; / and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Iesu Crist, that deyde for hise enemys. / And in-as-muche as thilke love is the more grevous to perfourne, in-so-muche is the more gretter the merite; and therefore the lovinge of oure enemy hath confounded the venom of the devel. / For right as the devel is disconfited by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy. / Certes,
530 thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venom of Envye fro mannes herte. / The speses of this pas shullen be more largely in hir chapitres folwinge declared. /

Sequitur de Ira.

§ 32. After Envye wol I discryven the sinne of Ire. For soothly, who-so hath envye upon his neighebor, anon he wole comunly finde him a matere of wratthe, in word or in dede, agayns him to whom he hath envye. / And as wel comth Ire of Pryde, as of Envye; for soothly, he that is proude or envious is lightly wrooth. /

§ 33. This sinne of Ire, after the

discryving of seint Augustin, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or
 535 by dede. / Ire, after the philosphre, is the fervent blood of man y-
 quiked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to him that he hateth. /
 For certes the herte of man, by eschaufinge and moevinge of his blood,
 wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle Iugement of resoun. / But ye
 shal understonde that Ire is in two maneres; that oon of hem is good,
 and that other is wikked. / The gode Ire is by Ialousye of goodnesse,
 thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikked-
 nesse; and therefore seith a wys man, that 'Ire is bet than pley.' / This
 Ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitternesse; nat
 wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the misdede of the man; as seith
 the prophete David, *Irascimini et nolite peccare.* /
 540 Now understondeth, that wikked Ire is in two maneres, that is to seyn, sodeyn Ire or
 hastif Ire, withouten avisement and consentinge of resoun. / The men-
 ing and the sens of this is, that the resoun of man ne consente nat to
 thilke sodeyn Ire; and thanne it is venial. / Another Ire is ful wikked,
 that comth of felonye of herte avysed and cast biforn; with wikked wil to
 do vengeance, and therto his resoun consenteth; and soothly this is dedly
 sinne. / This Ire is so displeasent to god, that it troubleth his hous and
 chaceth the holy goost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the
 lyknesse of god, that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule; / and
 put in him the lyknesse of the devel, and binimeth the man fro god that is
 545 his rightful lord. / This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel; for it
 is the develes fourneys, that is eschaufed with the fyr of helle. / For
 certes, right so as fyr is more mighty to destroyen erthely things than any
 other element, right so Ire is mighty to destroyen alle spirituel things. /
 Loke how that fyr of smale gledes,

that been almost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been
 touched with brimstoon; right so Ire wol everemo quiken agayn, whan it is
 touched by the pryde that is covered in mannes herte. / For certes fyr ne
 may nat comen out of no-thing, but-if it were first in the same thing natur-
 elly; as fyr is drawn out of flintes with steel. / And right so as pryde
 is ofte tyme matere of Ire, right so is rancour notice and keper of Ire. / 550
 Ther is a maner tree, as seith seint Isidre, that whan men maken fyr of
 thilke tree, and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fyr of it wol
 lasten al a yeer or more. / And right so fareth it of rancour; whan it is
 ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein, it wol lasten peraventure
 from oon Estre-day unto another Estre-day, and more. / But certes,
 thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of god al thilke while. /

§ 34. In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen three shrewes:
 Pryde, that ay bloweth and encreseth the fyr by chydinge and wikked
 wordes. / Thanne stant Envye, and holdeth the hote iren upon the herte
 of man with a peire of longe tonges of long rancour. / And thanne stant 555
 the sinne of contumelie or stryf and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by
 vileyns reprevinges. / Certes, this cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the
 man him-self and eek to his neighbor. For soothly, almost al the harm
 that any man dooth to his neighebor comth of wratthe. / For certes, out-
 rageous wratthe doth al that evere the devel him comaundeth; for he
 ne spareth neither Crist, ne his swete mooder. / And in his outrageous
 anger and Ire, allas! allas! ful many oon at that tyme feleth in his herte
 ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist and of alle hise halwes. / Is nat this a
 cursed vice? Yis, certes. Allas! it binimeth from man his wit and his
 resoun, and al his debonaire lyf spirituel that sholde kepen his soule. / 560
 Certes, it binimeth eek goddes due

lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, and the love of hise neighebores. It stryveth eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveth him the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule. /

§ 35. Of Ire comen thise stinkinge engendrures: first hate, that is old wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath loved ful longe. / And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebores, in body or in catel. / Of this cursed sinne of Ire cometh eek manslaughtre. And understonde wel, that homicyde, that is manslaughtre, is in dyverse wyse. Som manere of homicyde is spirituel, and som is bodily. / Spirituel manslaughtre is in six thinges. First, by hate; as seint Iohn seith, 'he that
565 hateth his brother is homicyde.' / Homicyde is eek by bakkytinge; of whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that 'they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hir neighebores.' For soothly, as wikke is to binime his good name as his lyf. / Homicyde is eek, in yevinge of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and tail-lages. / Of whiche seith Salomon, 'Leon rorynge and here hongry been lyke to the cruel lordshipes,' in with-
holdinge or abregginge of the shepe (or the hyre), or of the wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in with-drawinge of the almesse of povre folk. / For which the wyse man seith, 'fedeth him that almost dyeth for hunger'; for soothly, but-if thou fede him, thou sleest him; and alle these been deedly sinnes. / Bodily manslaughtre is, whan thow sleest him with thy tonge in other manere; as whan thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles yevest him conseil to
570 sleen a man. / Manslaughtre in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a Iustice damp-neth him that is coupable to the death. But lat the Iustice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he

do it nat for delyt to spille blood, but for kepinge of rightwisenesse. / Another homicyde is, that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from his owene deeth. / But certainly, if he may escape withouten manslaughtre of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly sinne. / Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homicyde. / Eek if a womman by negligence overlyeth hir child in hir sleping, it is homicyde and deedly sinne. / Eek whan man
575 destourbeth conception of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drinkinge venemouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drinks wilfully, or elles putteth certeine material thinges in hir secree places to slee the child; / or elles doth unkindely sinne, by which man or womman shedeth hir nature in manere or in place ther-as a child may nat be conceived; or elles, if a womman have conceived and hurt hir-self, and sleeth the child, yet is it homicyde. / What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicyde. / Homicyde is eek if a man approcheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perished, or elles smyteth a womman witingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle these been homicydes and horrible deedly sinnes. / Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo sinnes, as wel in word as in thoght and in dede; as he that arretteth upon god, or blameth god, of thing of which he is him-self guilty; or despyseth god and alle hise halwes, as doon these cursede hasardours in diverse contrees. / This cursed sinne
580 doon they, whan they felen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of god and of hise halwes. / Also, whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the

auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relesed, but that the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes; it is so greet and he so benigne. / Thanne comth of Ire attray angre; whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his sinne, / than wole he be angry and answeren hokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his sinne by unstedefastnesse of his flesh; or elles he dide it for to holde companye with hise felawes, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him; / or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his complexion is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certain age; or elles, he seith, it cometh him of gentillesse of hise auncestres; and semblable things. / Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol nat delivere hem-self. For soothly, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his sinne may nat been delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely biknoweth his sinne. / After this, thanne cometh swering, that is expres agayn the comandement of god; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of Ire. / God seith: 'thou shalt nat take the name of thy lord god in veyn or in ydel.' Also oure lord Iesu Crist seith by the word of seint Mathew: '*Nolite iurare omnino*: / ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevене, for it is goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Ierusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyn heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. / But seyeth by youre word, "ye, ye," and "nay, nay"; and what that is more, it is of yvel,' seith Crist. / For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so sinfully, in dismembriunge of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body. For certes, it semeth that ye thinke that the cursede Iewes ne dismembred nat y-nough the precieuse persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more. / And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to

swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of god in youre swering, as seith Ieremye *quarto capitulo*, '*Iurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia*: thou shalt kepe three condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse.' / This is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth; for every lesinge is agayns Crist. For Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whyl he useth swich unleveful swering. / Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, whan thou art constreynd by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. / Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for favour, ne for mede, but for rightwisnesse; for declaracioun of it to the worship of god and helping of thyne evene-cristene. / And therefore, every man that taketh goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and liveth agayns Cristes livinge and his techinge, alle they taken goddes name in ydel. / Loke eek what seint Peter seith, *Actuum quarto capitulo*, '*Non est aliud nomen sub celo*,' &c. 'Ther nis noon other name,' seith seint Peter, 'under hevене, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved;' that is to seyn, but the name of Iesu Crist. / Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith seint Paul *ad Philipenses secundo*, '*In nomine Iesu*, &c.: that in the name of Iesu every knee of hevently creatures, or erthely, or of helle sholden bowe'; for it is so heigh and so worshipful, that the cursede feend in helle sholde tremblen to heren it y-nempned. / Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise him more boldly than dide the cursede Iewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth whan he hereth his name. /

§ 36. Now certes, sith that swering, but-if it be lawefully doon, is so

highly deffended, muche worse is
600 forswering falsly, and yet nedelees. /

§ 37. What seye we eek of hem
that delysten hem in swering, and
holden it a gentrie or a manly dede
to swere grete othes? And what of
hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse
nat to swere grete othes, al be the
cause nat worth a straw? Certes,
this is horrible sinne. / Sweringe
sodeynly with-oute avyement is eek
a sinne. / But lat us go now to
thilke horrible swering of adiuracioun
and coniuracioun, as doon these false
enchauntours or nigromanciens in
bacins ful of water, or in a bright
swerd, in a cerle, or in a fyr, or in a
shulder-boon of a sheep. / I can
nat seye but that they doon cursedly
and damnably, agayns Crist and al
the feith of holy chirche. /

§ 38. What seye we of hem that
bileven in divynailes, as by flight or
by noyse of briddes, or of bestes, or
by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by
chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of
houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and
605 swich manere wrecchednesse? /
Certes, al this thing is deffended by
god and by al holy chirche. For
which they been acursed, til they
come to amendement, that on swich
filthe setten hir bileve. / Charmes
for woundes or maladye of men, or of
bestes, if they taken any effect, it
may be peraventure that god suffreth
it, for folk sholden yeve the more
feith and reverence to his name. /

§ 39. Now wol I speken of les-
inges, which generally is fals signifi-
cacioun of word, in entente to deceyven
his evene-cristene. / Som lesinge is
of which ther comth noon advantage
to no wight: and som lesinge turneth
to the ese or profit of o man, and to
dise and damage of another man. /
Another lesinge is for to saven his
lyf or his catel. Another lesinge
comth of delyt for to lye, in which
delyt they wol forge a long tale, and
peynten it with alle circumstaunces,
where al the ground of the tale is
610 fals. / Som lesinge comth, for he

wole sustene his word; and som
lesinge comth of recchelesnesse,
with-oute avyement; and semblable
thinges. /

§ 40. Lat us now touche the vyce
of flateringe, which ne comth nat
gladly but for drede or for coveitise. /
Flaterye is generally wrongful preis-
inge. Flatereres been the develes
nories, that norissen hise children
with milk of losengerie. / For sothe,
Salomon seith, that 'flaterie is wors
than detraccioun.' For som-tyme
detraccion maketh an hautein man be
the more humble, for he dredeth de-
traccion; but certes flaterye, that
maketh a man to enhauncen his herte
and his countenance. / Flatereres
been the develes enchauntours; for
they make a man to wene of him-self
be lyk that he nis nat lyk. / They 615
been lyk to Judas that bitraysed [god;
and these flatereres bitraysen] a man
to sellen him to his enemy, that is,
to the devel. / Flatereres been the
develes chapelleyens, that singen
evere *Placebo*. / I rekene flaterye
in the vyces of Ire; for ofte tyme,
if o man be wrooth with another,
thanne wol he flaterer som wight to
sustene him in his querele. /

§ 41. Speke we now of swich curs-
inge as comth of irous herte. Mali-
soun generally may be seyde every
maner power or harm. Swich
cursinge bireveth man for the
regne of god, as seith seint Paul. /
And ofte tyme swich cursinge
wrongfully retorneth agayn to him
that curseth, as a brid that retorneth
agayn to his owene nest. / And 620
over alle thing men oghten eschewe
to cursen hir children, and yeven to
the devel hir engendrure, as ferforth
as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril
and greet sinne. /

§ 42. Lat us thanne speken of
chydinge and reproche, whiche been
ful grete woundes in mannes herte;
for they unsowen the semes of frend-
shipe in mannes herte. / For certes,
unnethes may a man pleyntly beer ac-
corded with him that hath him openly

revyled and reprevyd in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. / And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outhur he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as 'mesel,' 'coked harlot,' or by som sinne that he dooth. / Now if he reprevy him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the reprevy to Iesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it meselric, or maheym, or maladye. / 625 And if he reprevy him uncharitably of sinne, as, 'thou holour,' 'thou dronkelewe harlot,' and so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the reioysing of the devel, that evere hath Ioye that men doon sinne. / And certes, chydinge may nat come but out of a vileyns herte. For after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. / And ye shul understonde that loke, by any wey, whan any man shal chastyse another, that he be war from chydinge or reprevinge. For trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fyr of angre and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and per-aventure sleeth him which that he mighte chastyse with benignitee. / For as seith Salomon, 'the amiable tonge is the tree of lyf,' that is to seyn, of lyf espirituel: and sothly, a deslavee tonge sleeth the spiritis of him that repreveth, and eek of him that is reprevyd. / Lo, what seith seint Augustin: 'ther is no-thing so lyk the develes child as he that ofte chydeth.' Seint Paul seith eek: 'I, servant of god, bihove nat to chyde.' / 630 And how that chydinge be a vileyns thing bitwixe alle manere folk, yet it is certes most uncovenable bitwixe a man and his wyf; for there is nevere reste. And therefore seith Salomon, 'an hous that is uncovered and droppinge, and a chydinge wyf, been lyke.' / A man that is in a droppinge hous in many places, though he eschewe the droppinge o place, it droppeth on him in another place; so fareth it by a chydinge wyf.

But she chyde him in o place, she wol chyde him in another. / And therefore, 'bette is a morsel of breed with Ioye than an hous ful of delycles, with chydinge,' seith Salomon. / Seint Paul seith: 'O ye women, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes as bihoveth in god; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.' *Ad Colossenses, tertio.* /

§ 43. Afterward speke we of scorninge, which is a wikked sinne; and namely, whan he scorneth a man for hise gode werkes. / For certes, 635 swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florisseth. / Thise scorneres been parting felawes with the devel; for they han Ioye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. / They been adversaries of Iesu Crist; for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule. /

§ 44. Speke we now of wikked conseil; for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour. For he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheless, yet is his wikked conseil first agayn him-self. / For, as seith the wyse man, every fals livinge hath this propertee in him-self, that he that wole anoye another man, he anoyeth him-self. / And men shul under- 640 stonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folk, namely, in conseilinge of soules. /

§ 45. Now comth the sinne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrelly; and no wonder is. For he deyde for to make concord. / And more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifyede; for god loveth bettre, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therefore been they lykned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken discord. /

§ 46. Now comth the sinne of double tonge; swiche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihinde; or elles they maken semblant as though they speke of good entencioun, or elles in game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente. /

§ 47. Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethe may he restore the
645 damage. /

Now comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth more than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme. /

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is with-ouen profit of him that speketh tho wordes, and eek of him that herkneth tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedeles, or with-ouen entente of naturel profit. / Andal-be-it that ydel wordes been som tyme venial sinne, yet sholde men douten hem; for we shul yeve rekeninge of hem bifore god. /

Now comth Iangling, that may nat been withoute sinne. And, as seith Salomon, 'it is a sinne of apert folye.' / And therefore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed him how that men sholde plesse the peple; and he answerde, 'do many gode werkes, and
650 spek fewe Iangles.' /

After this comth the sinne of Iaperes, that been the develes apes; for they maken folk to laughe at hir Iaperie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape. Swiche Iaperes deffendeth seint Paul. / Loke how that vertuose wordes and holy conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist; right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of Iaperis hem that travaillen in the service of the devel. / These been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of othere sinnes mo. /

Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire.

§ 48. The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairetee; and eek an-

other vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance. /

§ 49. Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by Ire. / 655 Suffrance suffreth swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward. / Seint Ierome seith thus of debonairetee, that 'it doth noon harm to no wight, ne seith; ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschaufeth nat agayns his resoun.' / This vertu somtyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre, 'a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and trefable to goodnesse; but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace, thanne is it the more worth.' /

§ 50. Pacience, that is another remedye agayns Ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to him. / The philosophre seith, that 'pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikked word.' / This vertu 660 maketh a man lyk to god, and maketh him goddes owene dere child, as seith Crist. This vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy. And therefore seith the wyse man, 'if thou wolt venuisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.' / And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciences. /

§ 51. The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes; thilke suffrede Iesu Crist with-ouen grucching, ful patiently, whan the Iewes despyssed and repreved him ful ofte. / Suffre thou therefore patiently; for the wyse man seith: 'if thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste.' / That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently,

whan he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but
 665 hise clothes. / The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passioun. / The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet sinne. / Heer-agayns suffred Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar up-on his blissed shulder the croys, up-on which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. / Heer may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, noight only Cristen men been pacient for love of Iesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable; but certes, the olde payens, that nevere were Cristene, commendeden and useden the vertu of pacience. /

§ 52. A philosophre up-on a tyme, that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was greetly amoved, and broghte a yerde
 670 to scourge the child; / and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister, 'what thanke ye to do?' 'I wol bete thee,' quod the maister, 'for thy correccion.' / 'For sothe,' quod the child, 'ye oghten first correcte youre-self, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' / 'For sothe,' quod the maister al wepinge, 'thou seyst sooth; have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correcte me for myn inpacience.' / Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. / And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good
 675 herte enterly, al that he sholde do. / Obedience generally, is to perfourne the doctrine of god and of his sovereyns, to whiche him oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse. /

Sequitur de Accidia.

§ 53. After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I speken of the sinne of Accidie. For Envy blindeth the herte of a man, and Ire troubleth a man; and Accidie maketh him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. / Envy and Ire maken bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is moder of Accidie, and binimeth him the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is Accidie the anguiss of a trouble herte; and seint Augustin seith: 'it is any of goodnesse and Ioye of harm.' / Certes, this is a dampnable sinne; for it doth wrong to Iesu Crist, in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. / But Accidie dooth no swich diligence; he dooth alle thing with any, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse and unlust; for which the book seith: 'acursed be he that doth the service of god negligently.' / Thanne is Accidie enemy
 680 to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneres. / Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne; in which estaat he was holden to wirche, as in herynge and adouringe of god. / Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to labour in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wole graunte hem to aysen out of hir sinnes. / Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is Accidie enemy and contrarie. For he loveth no businesse at al. / Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyfode of the body; for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporel necessitee; for it forsloweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse. /

§ 54. The fourthe thinge is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the

peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouthe and of hir hevinesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke. / Of Accidie comth first, that a man is annoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that god hath abhominacion of swich Accidie, as seith seint Iohan. /

§ 55. Now comth Slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. For soothly, Slouthe is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, and therefore he shendeth al that he dooth. / Agayns this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouthe sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon; thinkinge that oure lord Iesu Crist quyeth every good dede, be it never so lyte. / Usage of labour is a greet thing; for it maketh, as seith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde sinwes; and Slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. / 690 Thanne comth drede to biginne to werke any gode werkes; for certes, he that is enclined to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, / and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevous and so charge-aunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith seint Gregorie. /

§ 56. Now comth wanhope, that is despair of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede; imagininge that he hath doon so muche sinne, that it wol nat availen him, though he wolde repenten him and forsake sinne: / thurgh which despair or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner sinne, as seith seint Augustin. / Which dampnable sinne, if that it continue un-to his ende, it is cleped sinning in the holy gost. / 695 This horrible sinne is so perilous, that he that is despeired,

ther nis no felonye ne no sinne that he douteth for to do; as shewed wel by Iudas. / Certes, aboven alle sinnes thanne is this sinne most displeasnt to Crist, and most adversarie. / Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward champioun recreant, that seith creant withoute nede. Allas! allas! nedeles is he recreant and nedeles despeired. / Certes, the mercy of god is evere redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. / Allas! can nat a man bithinke him on the gospel of seint Luk, 15., where-as Crist seith that 'as wel shal ther be Ioye in hevене upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as up-on nynete and nyne rightfull men that nedden no penitence?' / 700 Loke further, in the same gospel, the Ioye and the feste of the gode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader. / Can they nat remembren hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk *xxiii^o capitulo*, how that the thief that was hanged bisyde Iesu Crist, seyde: 'Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest in-to thy regne?' / 'For sothe,' seyde Crist, 'I seye to thee, to-day shaltow been with me in Parady.' / Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. / Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. / Thanne 705 cometh Sompnolence, that is, sluggy slombringe, which maketh a man be hevly and dul, in body and in soule; and this sinne comth of Slouthe. / And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but-if ther were cause resonable. / For soothly, the morwe-tyde is most covenable, a man to seye his preyeres, and for to thinke on god, and for to honoure god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. / Lo! what seith Salomon: 'who-so

wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde.' / Thanne cometh Negligence, or recchelesnesse, that rekketh of no-thing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm,
 710 certes, Negligence is the norice. / Negligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely. /

§ 57. Of the remedie of these two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that 'he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon.' / And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plesse god by his werkes, and abaundone him-self, with al his might, wel for to doon. / Thanne comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at him at discovert, by temptacion on every syde. / This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes, and of alle langles,
 715 truffes, and of alle ordure. / Certes, the hevene is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that 'they ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men,' that is to seyn, in purgatorie. / Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but-if they doon penitence. /

§ 58. Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen *Tarditas*, as whan a man is to latrede or tarynge, er he wole turne to god; and certes, that is a greet folye. He is lyk to him that falleth in the dich, and wol nat aryse. / And this vyce comth of a fals hope, that he thinketh that he shal live longe; but that hope failleth ful ofte. /

§ 59. Thanne comth *Lachesse*; that is he, that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it and stinten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of him na-more kepe, anon as they
 720 finden any contrarie or any anoy. / These been the newe shepherdes, that leten hir sheep witingly go renne

to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. / Of this comth poverte and destruc-cioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges. Thanne comth a manere coldnesse, that frescth al the herte of man. / Thanne comth undevoicioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swiche langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devocioun, ne tra-vaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. / Thanne wexeth he slow and slombry, and sone wol be wrooth, and sone is encloned to hate and to envye. / Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped *tristicia*, that sleeth man, as seint Paul seith. / For certes, swich sorwe
 725 werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for ther-of comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lyf. / Wherefore swich sorwe short-eth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kinde. /

Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

§ 60. Agayns this horrible sinne of *Accidie*, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called *Fortitudo* or Strengthe; that is, an affecciou thurgh which a man despyseth anoyous thinges. / This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde mightily and wysely kepen him-self fro perils that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel. / For it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as *Accidie* abateth it and maketh it feble. For this *Fortitudo* may endure by long suffraunce the tra-vailles that been covenable. /
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§ 61. This vertu hath manye spesces; and the firste is cleped *Magnanimitie*, that is to seyn, greet corage. For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage agayns *Accidie*, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. / This vertu

maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevouse thinges, by hir owene wil, wysely and resonably. / And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man more by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, therefore men shal withstonden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun. / Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplise the gode werkes in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. / Thanne comth seuretee or sikernesse; and that is, whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne. / 735 Thanne comth Magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne; and that is the ende why that men sholde do gode werkes; for in the acomplissinge of grete goode werkes lyth the grete guerdoun. / Thanne is ther Constauce, that is, stableness of corage; and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede. / Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the Ioyes of hevене, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente. /

Sequitur de Auaricia.

§ 62. After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith saint Paule, that 'the rote of alle harmes is Coveitise': *Ad Timotheum, sexto capitulo.* / For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it-self and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel 740 solas of worldly thinges. /

§ 63. Avarice, after the descripcion of saint Augustin, is likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thinges. / Som other folk seyn, that Avarice is, for to purchaen manye erthely thinges,

and no thing yeve to hem that han nede. / And understand, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise. / And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Coveitise is this. Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thinges as thou hast nat; and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, withoute rightful nede. / Soothly, this Avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable; for al holy writ curseth it, and speketh agayns that vyce; for it dooth wrong to Iesu Crist. / For it bireveth 745 him the love that men to him owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun; / and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Iesu Crist, and dooth more observance in kepinge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Iesu Crist. / And therefore seith saint Paul *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that 'an avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.' /

§ 64. What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his cofre is his mawmet. / And certes, the sinne of Mawmetrye is the firste thing that God deffended in the ten comaundments, as bereth witnessse *Exodi, capitulo xx.* / 'Thou shalt have no 750 false goddes bfore me, ne thou shalt make to thee no grave thing.' Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresor biforn god, an ydolastre, / thurgh this cursed sinne of Avarice. Of Coveitise comen these harde lordshipes, thurgh whiche men been distreyned by tailages, custumes, and cariages, more than hir duetee or resoun is. And eek they taken of hir bonde-men ameriments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorcions than ameriments. / Of whiche ameriments and raunsoninge of bondemen, somme lordes stywardes

seyn, that it is rightful; for-as-muche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn. / But certes, these lordshipes doon wrong, that bireven hir bonde-folk things that they nevere yave hem: *Augustinus de Civitate, libro nono.* / Sooth is, that the condicioun of thraldom and the firste cause of thraldom 755 is for sinne; *Genesis, quinto.* /

§ 65. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. / Wherefore these lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, siththat by naturel condicion they been nat lordes of thralles; but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinne. / And forther-over, ther-as the lawe seith, that temporel godes of bonde-folk been the godes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the godes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. / And therefore seith Seneca: 'thy prudence sholde live benignely with thy thralles.' / Tilke that thou clepest thy thralles been goddes peple; for humble folk been Cristes freendes; they been contubernial with the lord. / 760

§ 66. Think eek, that of swich seed as cherles springeth, of swich seed springen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. / The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plyt. / Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wyse with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede. / I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is; and skile it is, that men do hir devoir ther-as it is due; but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlinges is dampnable. /

§ 67. And forther-over understand wel, that these conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that

been born of as royal blood as been they that hem conqueren. / This 765 name of thraldom was nevere erst couth, til that Noe seyde, that his sone Canaan sholde be thral to hise bretheren for his sinne. / What seye we thanne of hem that pilen and doon extorcions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he sholde deffenden holy chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it; and who so dooth, is traitour to Crist. / And, as seith seint Augustin, 'they been the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Iesu Crist'; and doon worse than wolves. / For soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he stinteth to strangle sheep. But soothly, the pilours and destroyours of goddes holy chirche ne do nat so; for they ne stinte nevere to pile. / Now, as I have seyde, sith so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus; that thilke tyme that al this world was in sinne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subieccioun. / But certes, sith 770 the tyme of grace cam, god ordeyned that som folk sholde be more heigh in estaat and in degree, and som folk more lowe, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and in his degree. / And therefore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom. And therefore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. / The Pope calleth him-self servant of the servaunts of god; but for-as-muche as the estaat of holy chirche ne mighte nat han be, ne the commune profit mighte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but-if god hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower: / therefore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hir underlinges or hir subgets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power; and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde. /

Wherfore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that deuouren the possessions or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with-ouen mercy or
 775 mesure, / they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to povre folk, the mercy of Iesu Crist, but-if it be amended. / Now comth deceite bitwixe marchant and marchant. And thow shalt understonde, that marchandise is in two maneres; that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly. That oon is honeste and leueful, and that other is deshoneste and unleueful. / Of thilke bodily marchandise, that is leueful and honeste, is this; that, there-as god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to him-self, thanne is it honeste and leueful, that of habundance of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedey. / And therefore, ther mote been marchants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyses. / That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false
 780 othes, is cursed and dampnable. / Spirituel marchandise is properly Symonye, that is, ententif desyr to byen thing espirituel, that is, thing that apertenth to the seintuarie of god and to cure of the soule. / This desyr, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al-be-it that his desyr ne take noon effect, yet is it to him a deedly sinne; and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. / Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to the apostles. / And therefore understond, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituels, been cleped Symonials; be it by catel, be it by procuringe, or by fleshly preyere of hise freendes, fleshly freendes, or espirituel freendes. / Fleshly, in two maneres; as by kinrede or othere freendes. Soothly, if they praye for him that is nat worthy and

able, it is Symonye if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther nis noon. / That other
 785 manere is, when a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccion that they have un-to the persone; and that is foul Symonye. / But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituels un-to hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eek that it be with-ouen bargayninge, and that the persone be able. / For, as seith Seint Damasio, 'alle the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, arn as thing of noght'; for it is the gretteste sinne that may be, after the sinne of Lucifer and Antecrist. / For, by this sinne, god forleseth the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that been nat digne. / For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu Christ and destroyen his patrimoine. / By
 790 swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men the lasse reverence of the sacraments of holy chirche; and swiche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten in-to the chirche the develes owene sone. / They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen to the wolf that strangleth hem. And therefore shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevене. / Now comth hasardrye with hise apurtenaunces, as tables and raffles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chydinges, and alle ravines, blaspheminge and reneyinge of god, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of godes, misspendinge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughtre. / Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been with-ouen greet sinne whyles they haunte that craft. / Of avarice comen eek lesinges, thefte, fals witnessse, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that thise been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the comaundements of god, as I have seyd. / Fals witnessse is in word and
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eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessing, or bireven him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessing; whan thou, for ire or for mede, or for envye, berest fals witsesse, or accusest him or excusest him by thy fals witsesse, or elles excusest thy-self falsly. / Ware yow, questemongereres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. / The sinne of thefte is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. / Corporel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure. / By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighebores catel, in entente nevere to payen it agayn, and semblable thinges. / Espirituel thefte is Sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtinge of holy thinges, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maneres; by reson of the holy place, as chirches or chirche hawes, / for which every vileyns sinne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places. Also, they that withdrawn falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche. / And pleylnly and generally, sacrilege is to reven holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place. /

Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie.

§ 68. Now shul ye understonde, that the relevinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken. And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relevinge of Avarice? / Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man; for he delyteth him in the kepinge of his tresor, and nat in the rescowinge ne relevinge of his evene-cristene. And therefore 805 speke I first of misericorde. / Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philoso-

phre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the misese of him that is misese. / Up-on which misericorde folweth pitee, in parfourninge of charitable werkes of misericorde. / And certes, these thinges moeven a man to misericorde of Iesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gilt, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale sinnes; / and therby relessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amened the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene. / The spes of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yeve and to foryeven and relesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his evene-cristene, and eek to chastyse there as nede is. / Another 810 manere of remedie agayns Avarice is resonable largesse; but soothly, here bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Iesu Crist, and of hise temporel goodes, and eek of the godes perdurables that Crist yaf to us; / and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon at that he hath, save only that he hath depended in gode werkes. /

§ 69. But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oghten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast. / Certes, he that is fool-large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly, what thing that he yeveth for veyne glorie, as to ministrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon almesse. / Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good nothing but sinne. / He is lyk to an hors 815 that seketh rather to drinken drovy or trouble water than for to drinken water of the clere welle. / And for-as-muchel as they yeven ther as they sholde nat yeven, to hem aper-tenteth thilke malisoun that Crist shal yeven at the day of dome to hem that shullen been dampned. /

Sequitur de Gula.

§ 70. After Avarice comth Glotonye, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of god. Glotonye is unmesurable appetyt to ete or to drinke, or elles to doon y-nogh to the unmesurable appetyt and desordeyne coveityse to eten or to drinke. / This sinne corrupted al this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke eek, what seith seint Paul of Glotonye. / 'Manye,' seith seint Paul, 'goon, of whiche I have ofte seyde to yow, and now I seye it wepinge, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist; of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hir wombe is hir god, and hir glorie in confusioun of hem that so savenen erthely thinges.' / He that is usant to this sinne of Glotonye, he ne may no sinne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vyces, for it is the develes hord ther he hydeth him and resteth. / This sinne hath manye speces. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly sinne. / But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drinke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodeynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly sinne, but venial. / The seconde spece of Glotonye is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble; for dronkenesse bireveth him the discrecioun of his wit. / The thridde spece of Glotonye is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no
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rightful manere of etinge. / The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred. / The fifthe is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drinkinge; for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even or on the night biforn. /

§ 71. In other manere been distinct the speeces of Glotonye, after seint Gregorie. The firste is, for to ete biforn tyme to ete. The seconde is, whan a man get him to delicat mete or drinke. / The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure. The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente to maken and appaillen his mete. The fifthe is, for to eten to gredily. / These been the fyve fingres of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to sinne. /

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Remedium contra peccatum Gule.

§ 72. Agayns Glotonye is the remedie Abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Augustin wole, that Abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience. / Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but-if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charitee, and that men doon it for godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene. /

§ 73. The felawes of Abstinence been Attemperaunce, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges: eek Shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee: Suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinks, ne dooth no fors of to outrageous apparailinge of mete. / Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavee appetyt of etinge: Sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke: / Sparinge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softly; wherfore som folk stonden of hir owene wil, to eten at the lasse leysur. /

835

Sequitur de Luxuria.

§ 74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie; for these two sinnes been so ny cosins, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. / God woot, this sinne is ful displeasunt thing to god; for he seyde himself, 'do no lecherie.' And therefore he putte

grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe. / If womman thral were taken in this sinne, she sholde be beten with staves to the deeth. And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she were a bisschoppes doghter, she sholde been brent, by goddes coman lement. / Forther over, by the sinne of Lecherie, god dreynte al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente fyve citees with thonderleyt, and sank hem in-to helle. /

840 § 75. Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stinkinge sinne of Lecherie that men clepe Avoutrie of wedded folk, that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. / Seint John seith, that avoutiers shullen been in helle in a stank brenninge of fyr and of brimston; in fyr, for the lecherie; in brimston, for the stink of hir ordure. / Certes, the brekinge of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was maked of god him-self in paradys, and conformed by Iesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew in the gospel: 'A man shal lete fader and moder, and taken him to his wyf, and they shullen be two in o flesh.' / This sacrament bitokneth the knittinge togidre of Crist and of holy chirche. / And nat only that god forbad avoutrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf. / In this heeste, seith seint Augustin, is forboden alle manere covetise to doon lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the gospel: that 'who-so seeth a womman to covetise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hir in his herte.' / Here may ye seen that nat
845 only the dede of this sinne is forboden, but eek the desyr to doon that sinne. / This cursed sinne anoyeth grevousliche hem that it haunten. And first, to hir soule; for he oblygeth it to sinne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. / Un-to the body anoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him, and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrificye to

the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. / And certes, if it be a foul thing, a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thing whan that, for swich ordure, women dispenden up-on men hir catel and substaunce. / This sinne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir gode fame, and al hir honour; and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for ther-by winneth he the moste partie of this world. / 850 And right as a marchant delyteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avantage of, right so delyteth the feend in this ordure. /

§ 76. This is that other hand of the devel, with fyve fingres, to cacche the peple to his vileinye. / The firste finger is the fool lookinge of the fool womman and of the fool man, that sleeth, right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venim of his sighte; for the covetise of eyen folweth the covetise of the herte. / The seconde finger is the vileyns touchinge in wikkede manere; and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk him that handleth the scorioun that stingeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his envenimminge; as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent hise fingres. / The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. / 855 The fourthe finger is the kissinge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovne or of a fourneys. / And more fooles been they that kissen in vileinye; for that mouth is the mouth of helle: and namely, thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse, though they may nat do, and smatre hem. / Certes, they been lyk to houndes; for an hound, whan he comth by the roser or by othere [bussches], though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. / And for that many man weneth that he may nat sinne, for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wyf; certes, that

opinion is fals. God woot, a man may sleen him-self with his owene knyf, and make him-selven dronken of his owene tonne. / Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth bi^orn god, it is his maumet, and he is
 860 his wyf by discrecioun, patiently and atemprely; and thanne is she as though it were his suster. / The fifthe finger of the develes hand is the stynkinge dede of Lecherie. / Certes, the fyve fingres of Glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man, and with hise fyve fynyngres of Lecherie he gripeth him by the reynes, for to thrown him in-to the fourneys of helle; / ther-as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepinge and wailinge, sharp hunger and thirst, and grimnesse of develes that shullen al to-trede hem, with-ouen respit and with-ouen ende. / Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse spes; as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat maried; and this
 865 is deedly sinne and agayns nature. / Al that is enemy and destruccion to nature is agayns nature. / Parfay, the resoun of a man telleth eek him wel that it is deedly sinne, for-as-muche as god forbad Lecherie. And seint Paul yeveth hem the regne, that nis dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly sinne. / Another sinne of Lecherie is to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyste degree that is in this present lyf, / and bireveth hir thilke precious fruit that the book clepeth 'the hundred fruit.' I ne can seye it noon other weyes in English, but in Latin it highte *Centesimus fructus*. / Certes, he that so dooth is cause of manye damages and vileinyes, mo than any man can reken; right as he som-tyme is cause of alle damages that bestes don in the feeld, that breketh the hegge or the closure; thurgh which he destroyeth
 870 that may nat been restored. / For

certes, na-more may maydenhede be restored than an arm that is smiten fro the body may retourne agayn to wexe. / She may have mercy, this woot I wel, if she do penitence; but nevere shal it be that she nas corrupted. / And al-be-it so that I have spoken somewhat of Avoutrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to Avoutrie, for to eschue that foule sinne. / Avoutrie in Latin is for to seyn, approchinge of other mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whylom weren o flesch abaundone hir bodies to othere persones. / Of this sinne, as seith the wyse man, folwen manye harmes. First, brekinge of feith; and certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. / And whan that feith is
 875 broken and lorn, soothly Cristendom stant veyn and with-ouen fruit. / This sinne is eek a thefte; for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. / Certes, this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hir; and stleth hir soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the devel. / This is a fouler thefte, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice; for thise Avoutiers breken the temple of god spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul. / Soothly of this thefte douted gretly Ioseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed him of vileinye, whan he seyde, 'lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world; ne no-thing of hise thinges is out of my power, but only ye that been his wyf. / And how sholde I
 880 thanne do this wikkednesse, and sinne so horribly agayns god, and agayns my lord? God it forbede.' Allas! al to litel is swich trouthe now y-founde! / The thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of god, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoine,

that is Crist: / For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter sinne for to breken it; for god made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of Innocence, to multiplye man-kinde to the service of god. / And therfore is the brekinge ther-of more grevous. Of which brekinge comen false heires ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. And therfore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevenc, that is heritage to gode folk. / Of this brekinge comth eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or sinnen with hir owene kinrede; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be lykned to a commune gonge, where-as
 885 men purgen hir ordure. / What seye we eek of putours that liven by the horrible sinne of putrie, and constreyned wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hir bodily puterie, ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child; as doon this baudes? Certes, thise been cursede sinnes. / Understonde eek, that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixe thefte and manslaughtre; for it is the gretteste thefte that may be; for it is thefte of body and of soule. / And it is lyk to homicide; for it kerveth a-two and breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therefore, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn. / But natheles, by the lawe of Iesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avoutrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wil of the Iewes, as was hir lawe: 'Go,' quod Iesu Crist, 'and have namore wil to sinne'; or, 'wille namore to do sinne.' / Soothly, the vengeance of avoutrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so be
 890 that it be destourbed by penitence. / Yet been ther mo spesces of this cursed sinne; as whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe; or of

folk that been entred in-to ordre, as subdekne or dekne, or preest, or hospitaliers. And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the sinne. / The thinges that gretly agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they received the ordre. / And forther-over, sooth is, that holy ordre is chief of al the tresorie of god, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee; to shewe that they been ioyned to chastitee, which that is most precious lyf that is. / And thise ordred folk been specially tytled to god, and of the special meynce of god; for which, whan they doon deedly sinne, they been the special traytours of god and of his peple; for they liven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and whyle they been suche traitours, hir prayers availen nat to the peple. / Preestes been angeles, as by the dignitee of hir misterye; but for sothe, seint Paul seith, that 'Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light.' /
 895 Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he may be lykned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungel of derknesse. / Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kinges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. / Belial is to seyn 'with-outen luge'; and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no luge, na-more than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that him lyketh in the toun. / So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree. / Thise preestes, as seith the book, ne conne nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat; they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flesh that was to hem offred, but they toke by force the flesh that is rawe. / Certes, so
 900 thise shrewes ne holden hem nat

apayed of rosted flesh and sode flesh, with which the peple fedden hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flesh of folkes wyves and hir doghtres./ And certes, these women that consenten to hir harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to holy chirche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle these him that sholde worshippe Crist and holy chirche, and preye for cristene soules./ And therefore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristen, til they come to amendement. / The thridde spece of avoutrie is som-tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and that is whan they take no reward in hir assemblinge, but only to hire fleshly delyt, as seith seint Ierome; / and ne rekken of no-thing but that they been assembled; by-cause that they been married, al is good y-nough, as thinketh to
 905 hem. / But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie; for in hir assemblinge they putten Iesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hem-self to alle ordure./ The fourthe spece is, the assemblee of hem that been of hire kinrede, or of hem that been of oon affinitee, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir kinrede han deled in the sinne of lecherie; this sinne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinrede./ And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhur goostly or fleshly; goostly, as for to delen with hise godsibbes./ For right so as he that engendredh a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel. For which a womman may in no lasse sinne assemblen with hir godsib than with hir owene fleshly brother. / The fifthe spece is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte, nathelees it is openly rehersed
 910 in holy writ. / This cursednesse doon men and women in diverse entente and in diverse manere; but though

that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes, holy writ may not been defouled, na-more than the soune that shyneth on the mixen./ Another sinne aperteneth to lecherie, that comth in slepinge; and this sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt; and this sinne men clepen pollucioun, that comth in foure maneres./ Somtyme, of languissinge of body; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Somtyme of infermetee; for the feblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh menciou. Som-tyme, for surfeet of mete and drinke. / And somtyme of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe; which may nat been with-oute sinne. For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful greuously. /

Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.

§ 77. Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Contynence, that restreyneth alle the desordeynee moevinges that comen of fleshly talentes. / And evere the gretter merite
 915 shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne. And this is in two maneres, that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwehode. / Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoine is leefful assemblinge of man and of womman, that receyven by vertu of the sacrament the bond, thurgh which they may nat be departed in al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whyl that they liven bothe. / This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrament. God maketh it, as I have seyde, in paradys, and wolde him-self be born in mariage. / And for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddinge, where-as he turned water in-to wyn; which was the firste miracle that he wroghte in erthe biforn hise disciples. / Trewe effect of mariage

clenseth fornicacioun and replenisseth holy chirche of good linage; for that is the ende of mariage; and it chaungeth deedly sinne in-to venial sinne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that
 920 been y-wedded, as wel as the bodies. / This is verray mariage, that was established by god er that sinne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in paradys; an dit was ordyned that o man sholde have but o womman, and o womman but o man, as seith Seint Augustin, by manye reasons. /

§ 78. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche. And that other is, for a man is heved of a womman; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. / For if a womman had mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god; and eek a womman ne mighte nat plesse to many folk at ones. And also ther ne sholde nevere be pees ne reste amonges hem; for everich wolde axen his owene thing. / And forther-over, no man ne sholde knowe his owene engendrure, ne who sholde have his heritage; and the womman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the time that she were conioynt to many men. /

§ 79. Now comth, how that a man sholde bere him with his wyf; and namely, in two thinges, that is to seyn in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed
 925 Crist whan he made first womman. / For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe. / For ther-as the womman hath the maistrie, she maketh to muche desray; ther nedene none ensamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffyse. / Also certes, god ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe; for she can nat pacintly suffre: but god made womman of the rib of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe un-to man. / Man sholde bere him to his

wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith seint Paul: that 'a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it.' So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede. /

§ So. Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hir housbonde, that telleth seint Peter. First, in obedience. / And eek, as seith the de- 930
 cree, a womman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnessse with-oute leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate, he sholde be so by resoun. / She sholde eek serven him in alle honestee, and been attempree of hir array. I wot wel that they sholde setten hir entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hir queyntise of array. / Seint Ierome seith, that wyves that been apparailled in silk and in precious purpre ne mowe nat clothen hem in Iesu Crist. What seith seint Iohn eek in this matere? / Seint Gregorie eek seith, that no wight seketh precious array but only for veyne glorie, to been honoured the more biforn the peple. / It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self be foul
 935 inward. / A wyf sholde eek be mesurable in lokinge and in beringe and in laughinge, and discreet in alle hir wordes and hir dedes. / And aboven alle worldly thing she sholde loven hir housbonde with al hir herte, and to him be trewe of hir body; / so sholde an housbonde eek be to his wyf. For sith that al the body is the housbondes, so sholde hir herte been, or elles ther is bitwixe hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage. / Thanne shal men understande that for three thinges a man and his wyf fleshly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children to the service of god, for certes that is the cause fynal of matrimoine. / Another cause is, to yelden everich of hem to other the dette of hir bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owene body. The thridde is, for to eschewe lecherye

and vileinye. The ferthe is for sothe
 940 deedly sinne. / As to the firste, it is
 meritorie; the seconde also; for, as
 seith the decree, that she hath merite
 of chastitee that yeldeth to hir hous-
 bonde the dette of hir body, ye, though
 it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of
 hir herte. / The thridde manere is
 venial sinne, and trewely scarsly may
 ther any of these be with-oute venial
 sinne, for the corrupcion and for the
 delyt. / The fourthe manere is for to
 understonde, if they assemble only for
 amorous love and for noon of the for-
 seyde causes, but for to accomplece
 thilke brenninge delyt, they rekke
 nevere how ofte, sothly it is deedly
 sinne; and yet, with sorwe, somme
 folk wol peynen hem more to doon
 than to hir appetyt suffyseth. /

§ 81. The seconde manere of chas-
 titee is for to becn a clene widewe, and
 eschue the embracings of man, and
 desyren the embracinge of Iesu Crist. /
 These been tho that han been wyves
 and han forgoon hir housbondes,
 and eek women that han doon le-
 cherie and been releevyd by Peni-
 945 tence. / And certes, if that a wyf
 coude kepen hir al chaast by licence
 of hir housbonde, so that she yeve
 nevere noon occasion that he agylte,
 it were to hire a greet merite. /
 These manere women that observen
 chastitee moste be clene in herte as
 well as in body and in thoght, and
 mesurable in clothinge and in conte-
 nance; and been abstinent in etinge
 and drinkinge, in spekinge, and in
 dede. They been the vessel or the
 boyste of the blissed Magdelene, that
 fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. /
 The thridde manere of chastitee is vir-
 ginitee, and it bihoveth that she be
 holy in herte and clene of body;
 thanne is she spouse to Iesu Crist,
 and she is the lyf of angeies. / She
 is the preisinge of this world, and she
 is as thise martirs in egalitee; she
 hath in hir that tonge may nat telle
 ne herte thinke. / Virginitee baar
 950 our lord Iesu Crist, and virgine was
 him-selve. /

§ 82. Another remedie agayns
 Lecherie is, specially to withdrawen
 swiche thinges as yeve occasion to
 thilke vileinye; as ese, etinge and
 drinkinge; for certes, whan the pot
 boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is
 to withdrawe the fyr. / Slepinge
 longe in greet quiete is eek a greet
 notice to Lecherie. /

§ 83. Another remedie agayns
 Lecherie is, that a man or a wom-
 man eschue the compagne of hem by
 whiche he douteth to be tempted;
 for al-be-it so that the dede is with-
 stonden, yet is ther greet temp-
 tacioun. / Soothly a whyt wal,
 al-though it ne brenne nocht fully
 by stikinge of a candele, yet is the
 wal blak of the leyt. / Ful ofte tyme
 I rede, that no man truste in his
 owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger
 than Sampson, and holier than David,
 and wyser than Salomon. / 955

§ 84. Now after that I have de-
 clared yow, as I can, the sevene
 deedly sinnes, and somme of hir
 braunches and hir remedies, soothly,
 if I coude, I wolde telle yow the ten
 comandements. / But so heigh a
 doctrine I lete to divines. Natheless,
 I hope to god they been touched in
 this tretice, everich of hem alle. /

De Confessione.

§ 85. Now for-as-muche as the
 second partie of Penitence stant in
 Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan
 in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Au-
 gustin seith: / sinne is every word
 and every dede, and al that men cov-
 eiten agayn the lawe of Iesu Crist;
 and this is for to sinne in herte, in
 mouth, and in dede, by thy fyve wittes,
 that been sighte, heringe, smellinge,
 tastinge or savouringe, and felinge. /
 Now is it good to understonde that
 that agreggeth muchel every sinne. / 960
 Thou shalt considere what thou art
 that doost the sinne, whether thou be
 male or femele, yong or old, gentil
 or thral, free or servant, hool or syk,
 wedded or sngle, ordred or unordred,

wys or fool, clerk or seculer; / if she be of thy kinrede, bodily or goostly, or noon; if any of thy kinrede have sinned with hir or noon, and manye mo thinges. /

§ 86. Another circumstaunce is this; whether it be doon in fornicacioun, or in avoutrie, or noon; incest, or noon; mayden, or noon; in manere of homicide, or noon; horrible grete sinnes, or smale; and how longe thou hast continued in sinne. / The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do sinne; whether in other mennes hous or in thyn owene; in feeld or in chirche, or in chirche-hawe; in chirche dedicat, or noon. / For if the chirche be halwed, and man or womman spille his kinde inwith that place by wey of sinne, or by wikked temptacion, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bishop; / and the preest that dide swich a vileinye, to terme of al his lyf, he sholde na-more singe masse; and if he dide, he sholde doon deedly sinne at every tyme that he so songe masse. / The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediators or by whiche messagers, as for entycement, or for consentement to bere companye with felawshipe; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the devel of helle. / Wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampnacioun of the sinner. / The fifthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how ofte that he hath falle. / For he that ofte falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of god, and encreeseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist; and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, / and the latter aryseth, and is the more eschew for to shryven him, namely, to him that is his confessour. / For which that folk, when they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhet they forleten hir olde confessours al outrely, or elles they departen

hir shrift in diverse places; but soothly, swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of god of hise sinnes. / The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man sinneth, as by whiche temptacioun; and if him-self procure thiike temptacioun, or by the excytinge of other folk; or if he sinne with a womman by force, or by hir owene assent; / or if the womman, maugree hir heed, hath been afforced, or noon; this shal she telle; for covetise, or for poverté, and if it was hir procuringe, or noon; and swiche manere harneys. / The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his sinne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hir. / 975 And the same shal the man telle pleyedly, with alle circumstaunces; and whether he hath sinned with comune bordel-wommen, or noon; / or doon his sinne in holy tymes, or noon; in fasting-tymes, or noon; or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte; / and hath, per-aventure, broken therfore his penance enioyned; by whos help and whos conseil; by sorcerie or craft; al moste be told. / Alle these thinges, after that they been grete or smale, enreggen the conscience of man. And eek the preest that is thy Iuge, may the bettre been avysed of his Iugement in yevinge of thy penance, and that is after thy contricioun. / For understand wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by sinne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence and shrifte and satisfaccioun; / 980 and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shryven him; and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it. /

§ 87. Thanne shal man looke and considere, that if he wole maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. / First, it moot been in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as seyde the king Ezekias to god: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf in bitternesse

of myn herte.' / This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The firste is, that confessioun moste be shamefast, nat for to covere ne hyden his sinne, for he hath agilt his god and defouled his soule. / And herof seith seint Augustin: 'the herte travaillith for shame of his sinne'; and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet mercy of
 985 god. / Swich was the confession of the publican, that wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevене, for he hadde offended god of hevене; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of god. / And ther-of seith seint Augustin, that swich shamefast folk been next foryevnesse and remissioun. / Another signe is humilitee in confessioun; of which seith seint Peter, 'Humbleth yow under the might of god.' The hond of god is mighty in confession, for ther-by god foryeveth thee thy sinnes; for he alone hath the power. / And this humilitee shal been in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilitee to god in his herte, right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in goddes place. / For which in no manere, sith that Crist is sovereyn and the preest mene and mediatour bitwixe Crist and the sinnere, and the sinnere is
 990 the laste by wey of resoun, / thanne sholde nat the sinnere sitte as heighe as his confessor, but knele biforn him or at his feet, but-if maladie destourbe it. For he shal nat taken kepe who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. / A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and comth for to axe mercy and maken his accord, and set him doun anon by the lord, men wolde holden him outrageous, and nat worthy so sone for to have remissioun ne mercy. / The thridde signe is, how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teres, if man may; and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat him wepe in herte. / Swich was the confession of seint Peter; for after that he

hadde forsake Iesu Crist, he wente out and weep ful bitterly. / The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun. / Swich was the confessioun
 995 of the Magdelene, that ne spared, for no shame of hem that weren atte feste, for to go to oure lord Iesu Crist and biknowe to him hir sinnes. / The fifthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penaunce that him is enyoned for hise sinnes; for certes Iesu Crist, for the giltes of a man, was obedient to the deeth. /

§ 88. The seconde condicion of verray confession is, that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the lenger that he tarieth to warisshe him-self, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deeth; and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to hele. / And right so fareth sinne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. / Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes; as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place; and eek the drecchinge of o synne draweth in another; /
 1000 and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro Crist. And if he abyde to his laste day, scarsly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenten him, for the grevous maladie of his deeth. / And for-as-muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Iesu Crist, whanne he hath spoken, he shal crye to Iesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herkne him. / And understand that this condicioun moste han foure thinges. Thy shrift moste be purveyed bifore and avysed; for wikked haste doth no profit; and that a man conne shryve him of hise sinnes, be it of pryde, or of envye, and so forth of the spesces and circumstances; / and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse

of hise sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne; / and eek that he be contrit of hise sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, nevere eft to falle in sinne; and eek that he drede and countrewaite him-self, that he flee the occasiouns of sinne to whiche he is enclyned. / Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy sinnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another; that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede; for it nis but stranglinge of thy soule. / For certes, Iesu Crist is entierly al good; in him nis noon imperfeccioun; and therefore outhere he foryeveth al paritly or nevere a deel. / I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein sinne, that thou art bounde to shewen him al the remenaunt of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast be shriven to thy curat, but-if it lyke to thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departinge of shrifte. / Ne I seye nat, ther-as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have lycence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee lyketh, and by lycence of thy curat, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy sinnes. / But lat no blotte be bihinde; lat no sinne been untold, as fer as thou hast remembrance. / And when thou shalt be shriven to thy curat, telle him eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last y-shriven; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte. /

1010 § 89. Also the verray shrifte axeth certeine condicions. First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, nocht constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thinges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confesse his trespass; / and that noon other man telle his sinne but he him-self, ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his sinne,

ne wratthe him agayn the preest for his amonestinge to leve sinne. / The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrifte be laweful; that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of holy chirche; / and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Iesu Crist, as Cayn or Iudas. / 1015 And eek a man moot accusen himself of his owene trespas, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene malice of his sinne, and noon other; / but nathelees, if that another man be occasioun or entyceer of his sinne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his sinne is agregged, or elles that he may nat pleynly shryven him but he telle the persone with which he hath sinned; thanne may he telle; / so that his entente ne be nat to bakbyte the persone, but only to declaren his confessioun. /

§ 90. Thou ne shalt nat eek make no lesinges in thy confessioun; for humilitee, per-aventure, to seyn that thou hast doon sinnes of whiche that thou were nevere gilty. / For Seint Augustin seith: if thou, by cause of thyn humilitee, makest lesinges on thy-self, though thou ne were nat in sinne biforn, yet artow thanne in sinne thurgh thy lesinges. / Thou 1020 most eek shewe thy sinne by thyn owene propre mouth, but thou be wexe doun, and nat by no lettre; for thou that hast doon the sinne, thou shalt have the shame therefore. / Thou shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the more thy sinne; for thanne bigylestow thyself and nat the preest; thou most tellen it pleynly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible. / Thou shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseilte thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of

Iesu Crist and the hele of thy soule. /
 Thou shalt nat eek renne to the
 preest sodeynly, to tellen him lightly
 thy sinne, as who-so telleth a lape
 or a tale, but avysely and with greet
 devocioun. / And generally, shryve
 thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte
 1025 thou aryse by confessioun. / And
 thogh thou shryve thee offer than
 ones of sinne, of which thou hast
 be shriven, it is the more merite.
 And, as seith seint Augustin, thou
 shalt have the more lightly relesing
 and grace of god, bothe of sinne
 and of peyne. / And certes, ones
 a yere atte leeste wey it is lawfull
 for to been housled; for certes ones
 a yere alle thinges renovellen. /

*Explicit secunda pars Penitencie;
 et sequitur tercia pars eiusdem, de
 Satisfaccione.*

§ 91. Now have I told you of
 verray Confessioun, that is the sec-
 onde partie of Penitence. /

The thridde partie of Penitence
 is Satisfaccion; and that stant
 most generally in almesse and in
 bodily peyne. / Now been ther
 three manere of almesses; contri-
 cion of herte, where a man offreth
 himself to god; another is, to han
 pitee of defeaute of hise neighebores;
 and the thridde is, in yevinge of
 good conseil goostly and bodily,
 1030 where men han nede, and namely
 in sustenance of mannes fode. /
 And tak keep, that a man hath
 need of these thinges generally; he
 hath need of fode, he hath nede of
 clothing, and herberwe, he hath
 nede of charitable conseil, and
 visitinge in prisone and in maladie,
 and sepulture of his dede body. /
 And if thou mayst nat visite the
 nedeful with thy persone, visite him
 by thy message and by thy yiftes. /
 These been generally almesses or
 werkes of charitee of hem that han
 temporel richesses or discrecioun in
 conseilinge. Of these werkes shal-
 tow heren at the day of dome. /

§ 92. These almesses shaltow
 doon of thyne owene propre thinges,
 and hastily, and prively if thou
 mayst; / but nathelees, if thou
 mayst nat doon it prively, thou shalt
 nat forbere to doon almesse though
 men seen it; so that it be nat
 doon for thank of the world
 but only for thank of Iesu
 Crist. / For as witnesseth Seint 1035
 Mathew, *capitulo quinto*, 'A citee
 may nat been hid that is set on a
 montoyne; ne men lighte nat a
 lanterne and put it under a busshel;
 but men sette it on a candle-stikke,
 to yeve light to the men in the
 hous. / Right so shal youre light
 lighten bifore men, that they may
 seen youre gode werkes, and glorifie
 youre fader that is in hevene.' /

§ 93. Now as to speken of bodily
 peyne, it stant in preyeres, in wak-
 inges, in fastinges, in vertuose
 techinges of orisouns. / And ye
 shul understonde, that orisouns or
 preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wil
 of herte, that redresseth it in god
 and expresseth it by word outward,
 to remoeven harmes and to han
 thinges espirituel and durable, and
 somtyme temporel thinges; of
 whiche orisouns, certes, in the
 orisoun of the *Pater-noster*, hath
 Iesu Crist enclosed most thinges. /
 Certes, it is privileged of three
 thinges in his dignitee, for which it
 is more digne than any other
 preyere; for that Iesu Crist him-
 self maked it; / and it is short, for 1040
 it sholde be coud the more lightly,
 and for to withholden it the more
 esily in herte, and helpen him-self
 the offer with the orisoun; / and
 for a man sholde be the lasse wery
 to seyn it, and for a man may nat
 excusen him to lerne it, it is so
 short and so esy; and for it com-
 prehendeth in it-self alle gode
 preyeres. / The expositioun of
 this holy preyere, that is so excel-
 lent and digne, I bitake to these
 maistres of theologie; save thus
 muchel wol I seyn: that, whan thou

prayest that god sholde foryewe thee thy giltes as thou foryevest hem that agilten to thee, be ful wel war that thou be nat out of charitee. / This holy orisoun amenuseth eek venial sinne; and therefore it aper-teneth specially to penitence. /

§ 94. This preyere moste be trewely seyde and in verray feith, and that men preye to god ordinatly and discreetly and devoutly; and alwey a man shal putten his wil to be subget 1045 to the wille of god. / This orisoun moste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anyoynce of any man or woman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. / It avayleth eek agayn the vyces of the soule; for, as seith seint Ierome, 'By fastinge been saved the vyces of the flesh, and by preyere the vyces of the soule.' /

§ 95. After this, thou shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakinge; for Iesu Crist seith, 'waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun.' / Ye shul understanden also, that fastinge stant in three thinges; in forberinge of bodily mete and drinke, and in forberinge of worldly Iolitee, and in forberinge of deedly sinne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen him for deedly sinne with al his might. /

§ 96. And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordeyned fastinge; and to fastinge appertenen 1050 foure thinges. / Largenesse to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne anyoied, ne grucche for he fasteth; and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth. /

§ 97. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techinge, by word or by wrytinge, or in ensample. Also in weriage of heyres or of stamin, or

of haubergeons on hir naked flesh, for Cristes sake, and swiche manere penances. / But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flesh ne make nat thyn herte bitter or angry or anyoied of thy-self; for bettre is to caste away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the sikernesse of Iesu Crist. / And therfore seith seint Paul: 'Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of god, in herte of misericorde, debonairetee, suffraunce, and swich manere of clothinge'; of whiche Iesu Crist is more apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. /

§ 98. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knockinge of thy brest, in scourginge with yerdes, in knelinges, in tribulacions; / in suffringe patiently 1055 wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesinge of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or othere freendes. /

§ 99. Thanne shaltow understonde, whiche thinges destourben penaunce; and this is in foure maneres, that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacion. / And for to speke first of drede; for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce; / ther-agayns is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penaunce is but short and litel at regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth with-ouen ende. /

§ 100. Now again the shame that a man hath to shryven him, and namely, thise ypocrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem; / agayns 1060 that shame, sholde a man thinke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns. / A man sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and woot alle hise thoghtes and alle hise werkes; to him may no thing been hid ne covered. / Men

sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that been nat penitent and shriven in this present lyf. / For alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world. /

§ 101. Now for to speken of the hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem, that stant
1065 in two maneres. / That oon is, that he hopeth for to live longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his delyt, and thanne he wol shryven him; and, as he seith, him semeth thanne tymely y-nough to come to shrifte. / Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. / Agayns the firste vyce, he shal thinke, that oure lyf is in no sikernesse; and eek that alle the richesces in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal. / And, as seith seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god, that nevere shal the peyne stinte of hem that nevere wolde withdrawen hem fro sinne, hir thanks, but ay continue in sinne; for thilke perpetual wil to do sinne shul they han perpetual peyne. /

§ 102. Wanhope is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that other is that they thinke, that they ne mighte
1070 nat longe persevere in goodnesse. / The firste wanhope comth of that he demeth that he hath sinned so greetly and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne, that he shal nat be saved. / Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thinke, that the passion of Iesu Crist is more strong for to unbinde than sinne is strong for to binde. / Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thinke, that as ofte as he falleth he may aryse agayn by penitence. And thogh he never so longe have leyn in sinne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven him to

mercy. / Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thinke, that the feblesse of the devel may no-thing doon but-if men wol suffren him; / and eek he shal han strengthe of the help of god, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list. / 1075

§ 103. Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penaunce; and, after the word of Iesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of hevne, / ther Ioye hath no contrariouste of wo ne grevaunce, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; ther-as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; ther-as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem everemo, everich of otheres Ioye; / ther-as the body of man, that whylom was foul and derk, is more cleer than the sonne; ther-as the body, that whylom was syk, freele, and feble, and mortal, is inmortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may no-thing apeyren it; / ther-as ne is neither hunger, thurst, ne cold, but every soule replenished with the sighte of the parfyt knowinge of god. / This blisful regne may men purchace by poverté espirituel, and the glorie by lownesse; the plente of Ioye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacioun of sinne. / 1080

Here taketh the makere of this booke his leve.

§ 104. Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretis or rede, that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem, that ther-of they thanken oure lord Iesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. / And if ther be any thing that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unconninge, and nat to my wil, that wolde ful fayn have seyð bettre if I hadde had

conninge. / For oure boke seith,
 'al that is writen is writen for oure
 doctrine'; and that is myn en-
 tente. / Wherefore I biseke yow
 mekely for the mercy of god, that
 ye preye for me, that Crist have
 mercy on me and foryeve me my
 giltes: / — and — namely, of my
 1085 translacions and endytinges of
 worldly vanitees, the whiche I re-
 voke in my retracciouns: / as is
 the book of Troilus; The book also
 of Fame; The book of the nyne-
 tene Ladies; The book of the
 Duchesse; The book of seint Val-
 entynes day of the Parlement of
 Bridles; The tales of Caunterbury,
 thilke that sounen in-to sinne; /
 The book of the Leoun; and many
 another book, if they were in my
 remembrance; and many a song
 and many a lecherous lay; that
 Crist for his grete mercy foryeve

me the sinne. / But of the trans-
 lacion of Boece de Consolacione,
 and othere bokes of Legendes of
 scintes, and omelies, and moralitee,
 and devocioun, / that thanke I
 oure lord Iesu Crist and his blisful
 moder, and alle the scintes of hev-
 ene; / bisekinge hem that they
 from hennes-forth, un-to my lyves
 ende, sende me grace to biwayle
 my giltes, and to studie to the sal-
 vacioun of my soule: — and graunte
 me grace of verrey penitence, con-
 fessioun and satisfaccioun to doon
 in this present lyf; / thurgh the 1090
 benigne grace of him that is king
 of kinges and preest over alle
 preestes, that boghte us with the
 precious blood of his herte; / so
 that I may been oon of hem at the
 day of dome that shulle be saved:
Qui cum patre, &c. 1092

*Here is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geffrey
 Chaucer, of whos soule Iesu Crist have mercy. Amen.*

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

THE TALE OF GAMELYN.

LITHEH, and lesteneth · and herkeneth
 aright,
 And ye schulle heere a talking · of a
 doughty knight;
 Sire Iohan of Boundys · was his righte
 name,
 He cowde of norture y-nough · and
 moehil of game.
 Thre sones the knight hadde · that with
 his body he wan; 5
 The eldest was a moche schrewe · and
 sone he bigan.
 His bretheren loved wel here fader · and
 of him were agast,
 The eldest deserved his fadre's curs · and
 had it at the last.

The goode knight his fader · livede so
 yore,
 That deth was comen him to · and han-
 dled him ful sore. 10
 The goode knight cared sore · syk ther he
 lay,
 How his children scholde · liven after his
 day.
 He hadde ben wyde-wher · but non hous-
 bond he was,
 Al the lond that he hadde · it was verrey
 purchas.
 Fayn he wolde it were · dressed among
 hem alle, 15
 That ech of hem hadde his part · as it
 mighte falle.

Tho sente he in-to cuntre · after wyse
 knightes,
 To helpe delen his londes · and dresen
 hem to-rightes.
 He sente hem word by lettres · they schul-
 den hye blyve,
 If they wolde speke with him · whyl he
 was on lyve. 20
 Tho the knightes herden · syk that he
 lay,
 Hadde they no reste · nother night ne
 day,
 Til they comen to him · ther he lay
 stille
 On his deth-bedde · to abyde goddes
 wille.
 Than seyde the goode knight · syk ther
 he lay, 25
 ‘Lordes, I you warne · for soth, withoute
 nay,
 I may no lenger liven · heer in this
 stounde;
 For thurgh goddes wille · deth draweth
 me to grounde.’
 Ther nas non of hem alle · that herde
 him aright,
 That they ne hadden reuthe · of that
 ilke knight, 30
 And seyde, ‘sir, for goddes love · ne dis-
 may you nought ;
 God may do bote of bale · that is now
 y-wrought.’
 Than spak the goode knight · syk ther
 he lay,
 ‘Boote of bale god may sende · I wot it
 is no nay;
 But I byseke you, knightes · for the love
 of me, 35
 Goth and dresseth my lond · among my
 sones three.
 And sires, for the love of god · deleth
 hem nat amis,
 And forgetith nat Gamelyn · my yonge
 sone that is.
 Taketh heed to that on · as wel as to that
 other;
 Schde ye see ony eyr · helpen his brother.’
 Tho leete they the knight lyen · that
 was nought in hede, 41
 And wenten in-to counsel · his londes for
 to dele;
 For to delen hem alle · to oon, that was
 her thought,

And for Gamelyn was yongest · he schulde
 have nought.
 Al the lond that ther was · they dalten
 it in two, 45
 And leeten Gamelyn the yonge · withoute
 londe go,
 And ech of hem seyde · to other ful lowde,
 His bretheren mighte yeve him lond ·
 whan he good cowde.
 Whan they hadde deled · the lond at here
 wille,
 They comen ayein to the knight · ther he
 lay ful stille, 50
 And tolden him anon-right · how they
 hadden wrought ;
 And the knight ther he lay · lyked it
 right nought.
 Than seyde the knight · ‘by seynt Mar-
 tyn,
 For al that ye have y-doon · yit is the
 lond myn ;
 For goddes love, neyheours · stondesth
 alle stille, 55
 And I wil dele my lond · right after my
 wille.
 Iohan, myn eldeste sone · schal have
 plowes fyve,
 That was my fadres heritage · whyl he was
 on lyve ;
 And my middleste sone · fyve plowes
 of lond,
 That I halp for to gete · with my righte
 hond ; 60
 And al myn other purchas · of londes
 and leedes,
 That I biquethe Gamelyn · and alle my
 goode steedes.
 And I biseke yow, goode men · that lawe
 come of londe,
 For Gamelynes love · that my queste
 stonde.’
 Thus dalte the knight · his lond by his
 day, 65
 Right on his deth-bedde · syk ther he lay ;
 And sone aftirward · he lay stoon-stille,
 And deyde whan tyme com · as it was
 Cristes wille.
 And anon as he was deed · and under
 gras y-grave,
 Sone the elder brother · gyled the yonge
 knave ; 70
 He took into his hond · his lond and his
 leede,

And Gamelyn himselve · to clothen and
to feede.

He clothed him and fedde him · yvel and
eek wrothe,

And leet his londes for-fare · and his
houses bothe,

His parkes and his woodes · and dede
nothing wel; 75

And seththen he it aboughte · on his faire
fel.

So longe was Gamelyn · in his brotheres
halle,

For the strengest, of good wil · they
doutiden him alle;

Ther was non ther-inne · nowther yong
ne old,

That wolde wraththe Gamelyn · were he
never so bold. 80

Gamelyn stood on a day · in his brotheres
yerde,

And bigan with his hond · to handlen his
berde;

He thoughte on his londes · that layen
unsawe,

And his faire okes · that down were
y-drawe;

His parkes were y-broken · and his deer
bireved; 85

Of alle his goode steedes · noon was him
bileved;

His howses were unbiled · and ful yvel
dight;

Tho thoughte Gamelyn · it wente nought
aright.

Afterward cam his brother · walkinge
thare,

And seyde to Gamelyn · ‘is our mete yare?’

Tho wraththed him Gamelyn · and swor
by goddes book, 91

‘Thou schalt go bake thy-self · I wil
nought be thy cook!’

‘How? brother Gamelyn · how answerest
thou now?’

Thou spake never such a word · as thou
dost now.’

‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘now me
thinketh neede, 95

Of alle the harmes that I have · I tok
never ar heede.

My parkes ben to-broken · and my deer
bireved,

Of myn armure and my steedes · nought
is me bileved;

Al that my fader me biquath · al goth to
schame,

And therfor have thou goddes curs ·
brother by thy name!’ 100

Than bispak his brother · that rape was
of rees,

‘Stond stille, gadeling · and hold right
thy pees;

Thou schalt be fayn for to have · thy mete
and thy wede;

What spekest thou, Gamelyn · of lond
other of leede?’

Thanne seyde Gamelyn · the child that
was ying, 105

‘Cristes curs mot he have · that clepeth
me gadeling!

I am no worse gadeling · ne no worse
wight,

But born of a lady · and geten of a
knight.’

Ne durste he nat to Gamelyn · ner a-foote
go,

But clepide to him his men · and seyde to
hem tho, 110

‘Goth and beteth this boy · and reveth
him his wit,

And lat him lerne another tyme · to an-
swere me bet.’

Thanne seyde the child · yonge Gamelyn,
‘Cristes curs mot thou have · brother art
thou myn!

And if I schal algate · be beten anon, 115

Cristes curs mot thou have · but thou be
that oon!’

And anon his brother · in that grete hete
Made his men to fette staves · Gamelyn
to bete.

Whan that everich of hem · a staf hadde
y-nome,

Gamelyn was war anon · tho he seigh
hem come; 120

Tho Gamelyn seigh him come · he loked
over-al,

And was war of a pestel · stood under a
wal;

Gamelyn was light of foot · and thider
gan he lepe,

And drof alle his brotheres men · right on
an hepe.

He loked as a wilde lyoun · and leyde on
good woon; 125

Tho his brother say that · he bigan to
goon;

He fley up in-til a loft · and schette the
 dore fast;
 Thus Gamelyn with the pestel · made hem
 alle agast.
 Some for Gamelynes love · and some for
 his eye,
 Alle they drowe by halves · tho he gan to
 pleye. 130
 ‘What! how now?’ seyde Gamelyn ·
 ‘evel mot ye thee!
 Wil ye biginne kontek · and so sone
 flee?’
 Gamelyn soughte his brother · whider he
 was flowe,
 And saugh wher he loked · out at a win-
 dowe.
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘com a litel
 ner, 135
 And I wil teche thee a play · atte boke-
 ler.’
 His brother him answerde · and swor by
 seynt Richer,
 ‘Whyl the pestel is in thin hond · I wil
 come no neer:
 Brother, I wil make thy pees · I swere by
 Cristes ore;
 Cast away the pestel · and wraththe thee
 no-more.’ 140
 ‘I mot neede,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe
 me at oones,
 For thou wolde make thy men · to breke
 myne boones,
 Ne hadde I had mayn · and might in myn
 armes,
 To have y-put hem fro me · they wolde
 have do me harmes.’
 ‘Gamelyn,’ sayde his brother · ‘be thou
 nought wroth, 145
 For to seen thee have harm · it were me
 right loth;
 I ne dide it nought, brother · but for a
 fonging,
 For to loken if thou were strong · and
 art so ying.’
 ‘Com a-down than to me · and graunte
 me my bone
 Of thing I wil thee aske · and we schul
 saughte sone.’ 150
 Down than cam his brother · that fikil was
 and fel,
 And was swithe sore · agast of the pestel.
 He seyde, ‘brother Gamelyn · aske me
 thy boone,

And loke thou me blame · but I graunte
 sone.’ 154
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, y-wis,
 And we schulle ben at oon · thou most
 me graunte this:
 Al that my fader me biquath · whyl he
 was on lyve,
 Thou most do me it have · yif we schul
 nat stryve.’
 ‘That schalt thou have, Gamelyn · I swere
 by Cristes ore!
 Al that thy fader thee biquath · though
 thou woldest have more; 160
 Thy lond, that lyth laye · ful wel it schal
 be sowe,
 And thyn howses reysed up · that ben
 leyd so lowe.’
 Thus seyde the knight · to Gamelyn with
 mowthe,
 And thoughte eek of falsnes · as he wel
 couthe.
 The knight thoughte on tresoun · and
 Gamelyn on noon, 165
 And wente and kiste his brother · and,
 whan they were at oon,
 Allas! yonge Gamelyn · nothing he ne
 wiste
 With which a false tresoun · his brother
 him kiste!
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth
 your tonge,
 And ye schul heere talking · of Gamelyn
 the yonge. 170
 Ther was ther bisyden · cryed a wrastling,
 And therfor ther was set up · a ram and a
 ring;
 And Gamelyn was in good wil · to wende
 therto,
 For to preven his might · what he cowthe
 do.
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘by seynt
 Richer, 175
 Thou most lene me to-night · a litel
 courser
 That is freisch to the spore · on for to
 ryde;
 I most on an erande · a litel her bisyde.’
 ‘By god!’ seyde his brother · ‘of steedes
 in my stalle
 Go and chese thee the best · and spare non
 of alle 180
 Of steedes or of coursers · that stonden
 hem bisyde;

And tel me, goode brother · whider thou
wolt ryde.
‘Her bisyde, brother · is cryed a wras-
tling,
And therfor schal be set up · a ram and a
ring;
Moche worschip it were · brother, to us
alle, 185
Might I the ram and the ring · bring home
to this halle.’
A steede ther was sadeled · smertely and
skeet;
Gamelyn did a paire spores · fast on his feet.
He sette his foot in the styrop · the steede
he bistrood,
And toward the wrasteling · the yonge
child rood. 190
Tho Gamelyn the yonge · was ride out at
the gat,
The false knight his brother · lokked it
after that,
And bisoughte Iesu Crist · that is heven
king,
He mighte breke his nekke · in that
wrasteling,
As sone as Gamelyn com · ther the place
was, 195
He lighte doun of his steede · and stood
on the gras,
And ther he herd a frankeleyn · waylo-
way singe,
And bigan bitterly · his hondes for to
wringe.
‘Goode man,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘why
makestow this fare?
Is ther no man that may · you helpe out
of this care?’ 200
‘Allas!’ seyde this frankeleyn · ‘that ever
was I bore!
For tweye stalworthe sones · I wene that
I have lore;
A champion is in the place · that hath
y-wrought me sorwe,
For he hath slayn my two sones · but-if
god hem borwe.
I wold yeve ten pound · by Iesu Crist!
and more, 205
With the nones I fand a man · to han-
delen him sore.’
‘Goode man,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wilt thou
wel doon,
Hold myn hors, whyl my man · draweth
of my schoon,

And help my man to kepe · my clothes
and my steede,
And I wil into place go · to loke if I may
speede.’ 210
‘By god!’ seyde the frankeleyn · ‘anon
it schal be doon;
I wil my-self be thy man · and drawn of
thy schoon,
And wende thou into the place · Iesu
Crist thee speede,
And drede not of thy clothes · nor of thy
goode steede.’
Barfoot and unger · Gamelyn in cam,
Alle that weren in the place · heede of
him they nam, 216
How he durste aunte him · of him to
doon his might
That was so doughty champion · in
wrastling and in fight.
Up sterte the champion · rapely and
anoon,
Toward yonge Gamelyn · he bigan to
goon, 220
And sayde, ‘who is thy fader · and who
is thy sire?
For sothe thou art a gret fool · that thou
come hire!’
Gamelyn answerde · the champion tho,
‘Thou knewe wel my fader · whyl he
couthe go,
Whyles he was on lyve · by seint Martyn!
Sir Iohan of Bounclys was his name · and
I Gamelyn.’ 226
‘Felaw,’ seyde the champion · ‘al-so
mot I thryve,
I knew wel thy fader · while he was on
lyve;
And thysel, Gamelyn · I wil that thou it
heere,
Whyl thou were a yong boy · a moche
schrewe thou were.’ 230
Than seyde Gamelyn · and swor by Cristes
ore,
‘Now I am older woxe · thou schalt me
finde a more!’
‘By god!’ seyde the champion · ‘wel-
come mote thou be!
Come thou ones in myn hond · schalt thou
never thee.’
It was wel withinne the night · and the
moone schon, 235
Whan Gamelyn and the champion · to-
gider gonne goon.

The champion caste tornes · to Gamelyn
that was prest,
And Gamelyn stood stille · and bad him
doon his best.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the cham-
pion,
'Thou art faste aboute · to bringe me
adoun; 240
Now I have y-proved · many tornes of
thyne,
Thow most,' he seyde, 'proven · on or
two of myne.'
Gamelyn to the champion · yede smertely
anon,
Of all the tornes that he cowthe · he
schewed him but oon,
And caste him on the lefte syde · that
three ribbes to-brak, 245
And ther-to his oon arm · that yaf a gret
crak.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · smertely anon,
'Schal it be holde for a cast · or elles for
noon?'
'By god!' seyde the champion · 'whether
that it be,
He that cometh ones in thin hand · schal
he never thee!' 250
Than seyde the frankeleyn · that had his
sones there,
'Blessed be thou, Gamelyn · that ever
thou bore were!'
The frankeleyn seyde to the champion ·
of him stood him noon eye,
'This is yonge Gamelyn · that taughte
thee this pleye.'
Agein answerd the champion · that lyked
nothing wel, 255
'He is a lither mayster · and his pley is
right fel;
Sith I wrastled first · it is y-go ful
yore,
But I was nevere in my lyf · handeled so
sore.'
Gamelyn stood in the place · allone with-
oute serk,
And seyde, 'if ther be eny mo · lat hem
come to werk; 260
The champion that peyned him · to
werke so sore,
It semeth by his continaunce · that he
wil no-more.'
Gamelyn in the place · stood as stille as
stoon,

For to abyde wrasteling · but ther com
noon;
Ther was noon with Gamelyn · wolde
wastle more, 265
For he handled the champion · so won-
derly sore.
Two gentil-men ther were · that yemed
the place,
Comen to Gamelyn · (god yeve him goode
grace!)
And sayde to him, 'do on · thyn hosen
and thy schoon,
For sothe at this tyme · this feire is
y-doon.' 270
And than seyde Gamelyn · 'so mot I wel
fare,
I have nought yet halven-del · sold up my
ware.'
Tho seyde the champion · 'so brouke I
my sweere,
He is a fool that ther-of byeth · thou sell-
est it so deere.'
Tho sayde the frankeleyn · that was in
moche care, 275
'Felaw,' he seyde · 'why lakkest thou
his ware?
By seynt Iame in Galys · that many man
hath sought,
Yet it is to good cheep · that thou hast
y-bought.'
Tho that wardeynes were · of that wras-
teling
Come and broughte Gamelyn · the ram
and the ring, 280
And seyden, 'have, Gamelyn · the ring
and the ram,
For the beste wrasteler · that ever here
cam.'
Thus wan Gamelyn · the ram and the ring,
And wente with moche loye · home in
the morning.
His brother seih wher he cam · with the
grete rowte, 285
And bad schitte the gate · and holde him
withoute.
The porter of his lord · was ful sore
agast,
And sterte anon to the gate · and lokked
it fast.
Now litheth, and lesteneth · bothe
yonge and olde,
And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn
the bolde. 290

Gamelyn come ther-to · for to have comen
in,
And thanne was it y-schet · faste with a
pin;
Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘porter, undo the
yat,
For many good mannes sone · stondeth
ther-at.’
Than answerd the porter · and swor by
goddess berde, 295
‘Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn · come into
this yerde.’
‘Thow lixt,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘so browke
I my chin!’
He smot the wiket with his foot · and
brak away the pin.
The porter seyh tho · it might no better
be,
He sette foot on erthe · and bigan to flee.
‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘that tra-
vail is y-lore, 301
For I am of foot as light as thou · though
thou haddest swore.’
Gamelyn overtook the porter · and his
teene wrak,
And gerte him in the nekke · that the
bon to-brak,
And took him by that oon arm · and
threw him in a welle, 305
Seven fadmen it was deep · as I have
herd telle.
Whan Gamelyn the yonge · thus hadde
pleyd his play,
Alle that in the yerde were · drewen hem
away;
They dredden him ful sore · for werkes
that he wroughte,
And for the faire company · that he thider
broughte. 310
Gamelyn yede to the gate · and leet it up
wyde;
He leet in alle maner men · that gon in
wolde or ryde,
And seyde, ‘ye be welcome · withouten
eny greeve,
For we wiln be maistres heer · and aske
no man leve. 314
Yestirday I lefte’ · seyde yonge Gamelyn,
‘In my brother seller · fyve tonne of wyn;
I wil not that this compaignye · parten
a-twinne,
And ye wil doon after me · whyl eny sope
is thrinne,

And if my brother grucche · or make foul
cheere,
Other for spense of mete or drink · that
we spenden heere, 320
I am oure catour · and bere oure allere
purs,
He schal have for his grucching · seint
Maries curs.
My brother is a niggoun · I swer by
Cristes ore,
And we wil spende largely · that he hath
spared yore;
And who that maketh grucching · that
we here dwelle, 325
He schal to the porter · into the draw-
welle.’
Seven dayes and seven night · Gamelyn
held his feste,
With moche mirth and solas · that was
ther, and no cheste;
In a little toret · his brother lay y-steke,
And sey hem wasten his good · but durste
he not speke. 330
Erly on a morning · on the eighte day,
The gestes come to Gamelyn · and wolde
gon here way.
‘Lordes,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wil ye so hye?
Al the wyn is not yet dronke · so brouke
I myn yē.’
Gamelyn in his herte · was he ful wo, 335
Whan his gestes took her leve · from him
for to go;
He wolde they had lenger abide · and
they seyde ‘nay,’
But bitaughte Gamelyn · god, and good
day.
Thus made Gamelyn his feest · and
broughte it wel to ende,
And after his gestes · took leve to wende.
Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth
youre tonge, 341
And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn
the yonge;
Herkeneth, lordinges · and lesteneth
aright,
Whan alle gestes were goon · how Game-
lyn was dight.
Al the whyl that Gamelyn · heeld his
mangerye, 345
His brother thoughte on him be wreke ·
with his treccherye.
Tho Gamelyns gestes · were riden and
y-gooun,

Gamelyn stood allone · frendes had he
 noon;
 Tho after ful soone · withinne a litel
 stounde,
 Gamelyn was y-taken · and ful harde
 y-bounde. 350
 Forth com the false knight · out of the
 soleer,
 To Gamelyn his brother · he yede ful
 neer,
 And sayde to Gamelyn · ‘who made thee
 so bold
 For to stroye my stoor · of myn hous-
 hold?’
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe
 thee right nought, 355
 For it is many day y-gon · siththen it was
 bought;
 For, brother, thou hast y-had · by seynt
 Richer,
 Of fitene plowes of lond · this sixtene yer,
 And of alle the beestes · thou hast forth
 bred,
 That my fader me biquath · on his deth-
 bed; 360
 Of al this sixtene yeer · I yeve thee the
 prow,
 For the mete and the drink · that we have
 spended now.’
 Thanne seyde the false knight · (evel
 mot he thee!)
 ‘Herkne, brother Gamelyn · what I wol
 yeve thee;
 For of my body, brother · heir geten have
 I noon, 365
 I wil make thee myn heir · I swere by
 seint Iohan.’
 ‘*Par ma foy!*’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘and if it
 so be,
 And thou thenke as thou seyst · god yelde
 it thee!’
 Nothing wiste Gamelyn · of his brotheres
 gyle;
 Therefore he him bigyled · in a litel
 whyle. 370
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde he · ‘o thing I thee
 telle;
 Tho thou threwe my porter · in the draw-
 welle,
 I swor in that wraththe · and in that grete
 moot,
 That thou schuldest be bounde · bothe
 hand and foot;

Therefore I thee biseche · brother Game-
 lyn, 375
 Lat me nought be forsworen · brother art
 thou myn;
 Lat me binde thee now · bothe hand and
 feet,
 For to holde myn avow · as I thee bi-
 heet.’
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘al-so mot I
 thee!
 Thou schalt not be forsworen · for the
 love of me.’ 380
 Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte · mighte
 he nat stonde,
 Til they hadde him bounde · bothe foot
 and honde.
 The false knight his brother · of Gamelyn
 was agast,
 And sente aftir feteres · to feteren him
 f. t.
 His brother made lesinges · on him ther
 he stood, 385
 And tolde hem that comen in · that
 Gamelyn was wood.
 Gamelyn stood to a post · bounden in
 the halle,
 Tho that comen in ther · lokede on him
 alle.
 Ever stood Gamelyn · even upright;
 But mete ne drink had he non · neither
 day ne night. 390
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, by myn
 hals,
 Now I have aspyed · thou art a party
 fals;
 Had I wist that tresoun · that thou had-
 dest y-founde,
 I wolde have yeve thee strokes · or I had
 be bounde!’
 Gamelyn stood bounden · stille as eny
 stoon; 395
 Two dayes and two nightes · mete had he
 noon.
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that stood
 y-bounde stronge,
 ‘Adam spenser · me thinkth I faste to
 longe;
 Adam spenser · now I byseche thee,
 For the mochel love · my fader loved
 thee, 400
 If thou may come to the keyes · lese me
 out of bond,
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’

Thanne seyde Adam · that was the
 spencer,
 'I have served thy brother · this sixtene
 yeer,
 If I leete thee goon · out of his bour, 405
 He wolde say afterward · I were a tray-
 tour.'
 'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn · 'so brouke I
 myn hals!
 Thou schalt finde my brother · atte laste
 fals;
 Therfor, brother Adam · louse me out of
 bond,
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free
 lond,' 410
 'Up swich a forward' · seyde Adam,
 'y-wis,
 I wil do therto · al that in me is.'
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'al-so mot I
 thee,
 I wol holde thee covenant · and thou wil
 me.'
 Anon as Adames lord · to bedde was
 y-goon, 415
 Adam took the keys, and leet · Gamelyn
 out anoon;
 He unlokked Gamelyn · bothe handes
 and feet,
 In hope of avauncement · that he him
 biheet.
 Than seyde Gamelyn · 'thanked be god-
 des sonde! 419
 Now I am loosed · bothe foot and honde;
 Had I now eten · and dronken aright,
 Ther is noon in this hous · schulde binde
 me this night.'
 Adam took Gamelyn · as stille as ony
 stoon,
 And ladde him in-to spence · rapely and
 anon,
 And sette him to soper · right in a privee
 stede, 425
 He bad him do gladly · and Gamelyn so
 dede.
 Anon as Gamelyn hadde · eten wel and
 fyn,
 And therto y-dronke wel · of the rede wyn,
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'what is now thy
 reed?
 Wher I go to my brother · and girde of
 his heed?' 430
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'it schal not be
 so.

I can teche thee a reed · that is worth
 the two.
 I wot wel for sothe · that this is no nay,
 We schul have a mangery · right on
 Soneday; 434
 Abbotes and priours · many heer schal be,
 And other men of holy chirche · as I telle
 thee;
 Thow schalt stonde up by the post · as
 thou were hond-fast,
 And I schal leve hem unloke · away thou
 may hem cast.
 Whan that they have eten · and wasschen
 here hondes,
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle · to bring
 thee out of bondes; 440
 And if they wille borwe thee · that were
 good game,
 Then were thou out of prisoun · and I
 out of blame;
 And if everich of hem · say unto us
 'nay,'
 I schal do an other · I swere by this day!
 Thou schalt have a good staf · and I wil
 have another, 445
 And Cristes curs have that oon · that fail-
 eth that other!'
 'Ye, for gode!' sayde Gamelyn · 'I say
 it for me,
 If I fayle on my syde · yvel mot I thee!
 If we schul algate · assoile hem of here
 sinne,
 Warne me, brother Adam · whan I schal
 biginne.' 450
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'by seynte
 Charite,
 I wil warne thee biforn · whan that it
 schal be;
 Whan I twinke on thee · loke for to goon,
 And cast away the feteres · and com to
 me anoon.'
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'blessed be thy
 bones! 455
 That is a good conseil · yeven for the
 nones;
 If they werne me thanne · to bringe me
 out of bendes,
 I wol sette goode strokes · right on here
 lendes.'
 Tho the Sonday was y-come · and folk
 to the feste,
 Faire they were welcomed · both leste
 and meste; 460

And ever atte halle-dore · as they comen
in,
They caste their eye · on yonge Gamelyn.
The false knight his brother · ful of
trechery,
Alle the gestes that ther were · atte
mangery,
Of Gamelyn his brother · he tolde hem
with mouthe 465
Al the harm and the schame · that he
telle couthe.
Tho they were served · of messes two or
three,
Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘how serve ye me?
It is nought wel served · by god that al
made!
That I sitte fasting · and other men make
glade.’ 470
The false knight his brother · ther that
he stood,
Tolde alle his gestes · that Gamelyn was
wood;
And Gamelyn stood stille · and answerde
nought,
But Adames wordes · he held in his
thought.
Tho Gamelyn gan speke · dolfully with-
alle 475
To the grete lordes · that saten in the
halle:
‘Lordes,’ he seyde · ‘for Cristes pas-
sioun,
Helpeth bringe Gamelyn · out of prisoun.’
Than seyde an abbot · sorwe on his
cheeke!
‘He schal have Cristes curs · and seynte
Maries eeke, 480
That thee out of prisoun · beggeth other
borwe,
But ever worthe hem wel · that doth thee
moche sorwe.’
After that abbot · than spak another,
‘I wold thin heed were of · though thou
were my brother!
Alle that thee borwe · foule mot hem
falle!’ 485
Thus they seyden alle · that weren in the
halle.
Than seyde a priour · yvel mot he thryve!
‘It is moche scathe, boy · that thou art
on lyve.’
‘Ow!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so brouke I my
bon!

Now I have aspyed · that freendes have
I non. 490
Cursed mot he worthe · bothe fleisch and
blood,
That ever do priour · or abbot ony
good!’
Adam the spencer · took up the cloth,
And loked on Gamelyn · and say that he
was wroth;
Adam on the pantrye · litel he thoughte,
But two goode staves · to halle-dore he
broughte, 496
Adam loked on Gamelyn · and he was
war anoon,
And caste away the feteres · and he
bigan to goon:
Tho he com to Adam · he took that oo staf,
And bigan to worche · and goode strokes
yaf. 500
Gamelyn cam in-to the halle · and the
spencer bothe,
And loked hem aboute · as they had be
wrothe;
Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water · with an
oken spire,
That some that stooode upright · fellen in
the fire.
There was non lewed man · that in the
halle stood, 505
That wolde do Gamelyn · eny thing but
good,
But stood bisyden · and leet hem bothe
werche,
For they hadde non rewthe · of men of
holy cherche;
Abbot or priour · monk or chanoun,
That Gamelyn overtok · anon they yeeden
doun. 510
Ther was non of hem alle · that with his
staf mette,
That he ne made him overthrowe · and
quitte him his dette.
‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘for seynte
Charite,
Pay large liverey · for the love of me,
And I wil kepe the dore · so ever here I
masse! 515
Er they ben assoyled · there shal noon
passe.’
‘Dowt thee nought,’ seyde Gamelyn ·
‘whyl we ben in-feere,
Kep thou wel the dore · and I wol werche
heere;

Stere thee, good Adam · and lat ther
 noon flee,
 And we schul telle largely · how many that
 ther be. 520
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘do hem but
 good;
 They ben men of holy chirche · draw of
 hem no blood,
 Save wel the croune · and do hem non
 harmes,
 But brek bothe her legges · and siththen
 here armes.’
 Thus Gamelyn and Adam · wroughte
 right fast, 525
 And pleyden with the monkes · and
 made hem agast.
 Thider they come ryding · lolily with
 swaynes,
 And hom ayen they were y-lad · in cartes
 and in waynes.
 Tho they hadden al y-don · than seyde a
 gray frere,
 ‘Allas! sire abbot · what dide we now
 here? 530
 Tho that we comen hider · it was a cold
 reed,
 Us hadde ben better at home · with water
 and with breed.’
 Why! Gamelyn made ordres · of monkes
 and frere,
 Ever stood his brother · and made foul
 chere;
 Gamelyn up with his staf · that he wel
 knew, 535
 And gerte him in the nekke · that he
 overthrew;
 A litel above the girdel · the rigge-bon
 to-barst;
 And sette him in the feteres · ther he sat
 arst.
 ‘Sitte ther, brother’ · sayde Gamelyn,
 ‘For to colen thy blood · as I dide myn.’
 As swythe as they hadde · y-wroken hem
 on here foon, 541
 They askeden watir · and wisschen
 anoon,
 What some for here love · and some for
 here awe,
 Alle the servants served hem · of the beste
 lawe.
 The scherreve was thennes · but a fyve
 myle, 545
 And al was y-told him · in a litel whyle,

How Gamelyn and Adam · had doon a
 sory rees,
 Bounden and y-wounded men · ayen the
 kinges pees;
 Tho bigan some · stryf for to wake,
 And the scherref was aboute · Gamelyn
 for to take. 550
 Now lytheth and lesteneth · so god yif
 you good fyn!
 And ye schul heere good game · of yonge
 Gamelyn.
 Four and twenty yonge men · that heelden
 hem ful bolde,
 Come to the schirref · and seyde that
 they wolde
 Gamelyn and Adam · fetten, by her fay;
 The scherref yaf hem leve · soth as I you
 say; 556
 They hyeden faste · wold they nought
 bilinne,
 Til they come to the gate · ther Gamelyn
 was inne.
 They knocked on the gate · the porter
 was ny,
 And loked out at an hol · as man that
 was sly. 560
 The porter hadde biholde · hem a litel
 whyle,
 He lovel wel Gamelyn · and was adrad
 of gyle,
 And leet the wicket stonden · y-steke ful
 stille,
 And asked hem withoute · what was here
 wille.
 For al the grete company · thanne spak
 but oon, 565
 ‘Undo the gate, porter · and lat us in
 goon.’
 Than seyde the porter · ‘so brouke I my
 chin,
 Ye schul sey your erand · er ye comen
 in.’
 ‘Sey to Gamelyn and Adam · if here
 wille be,
 We wil speke with hem · wordes two or
 thre.’ 570
 ‘Felaw,’ seyde the porter · ‘stond there
 stille,
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn · to witen
 his wille.’
 In wente the porter · to Gamelyn anoon,
 And seyde, ‘Sir, I warne you · her ben
 come your foon;

The scherreves meyne · ben atte gate,
For to take you bothe · schulle ye nat
scape.' 576

'Porter,' seyde Gamelyn · 'so moot I wel
thee!

I wil allowe thee thy wordes · whan I my
tyme see;

Go agayn to the yate · and dwel with hem
a whyle,

And thou schalt see right sone · porter, a
gyle.

Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'looke thee to
goon;' 581

We have foo-men atte gate · and frendes
never oon;

It ben the schirrefes men · that hider ben
y-come,

They ben swore to-gidere · that we schul
be nome.'

'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'hye thee right
blyve,' 585

And if I faille thee this day · evel mot I
thryve!

And we schul so welcome · the scherreves
men,

That some of hem schul make · here
beddes in the fen.'

Atte posterne-gate · Gamelyn out wente,
And a good cart-staf · in his hand he
hente; 590

Adam hente sone · another gret staf
For to helpen Gamelyn · and goode strokes
yaf.

Adam felde tweyne · and Gamelyn felde
three,

The other setten feet on erthe · and bi-
gonne flee.

'What?' seyde Adam · 'so ever here I
masse!' 595

I have a draught of good wyn! · drink er
ye passe!'

'Nay, by god!' sayde thay · 'thy drink
is not good,

It wolde make mannes brayn · to lyen in
his hood.'

Gamelyn stood stille · and loked him
aboute,

And seið the scherreve come · with a
gret route. 600

'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'what be now
thy reedes?

Here cometh the scherreve · and wil
have oure heedes.'

Adam sayde, 'Gamelyn · my reed is now
this,

Abyde we no lenger · lest we fare amis:
I rede that we to wode goon · ar that we
be founde,' 605

Better is us ther loos · than in town
y-bounde.'

Adam took by the hond · yonge Gamelyn;
And everich of hem two · drank a

draught of wyn,

And after took her cours · and wenten
her way;

Tho fond the scherreve · nest, but non
ay. 610

The scherreve lighte adoun · and went
in-to the halle,

And fond the lord y-fetered · faste with-
alle.

The scherreve unfetered him · sone, and
that anoon,

And sente after a leche · to hele his rigge-
boon.

Lete we now this false knight · lyen in
his care, 615

And talke we of Gamelyn · and loke how
he fare.

Gamelyn in-to the woode · stalkede stille,
And Adam the spenser · lykede ful ille;

Adam swor to Gamelyn · by seynt
Richer, 619

'Now I see it is mery · to be a spenser,
That lever me were · keyes for to bere,

Than walken in this wilde woode · my
clothes to tere.'

'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'dismaye thee
right nought;

Many good mannes child · in care is
y-brought.'

And as they stode talking · bothen in-
feere, 625

Adam herd talking of men · and neyh,
him thought, they were.

Tho Gamelyn under the woode · lokede
aright,

Sevenc score of yonge men · he saugh wel
a-dight;

Alle satte atte mete · in compas aboute.
'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'now have we
no doute, 630

After bale cometh boote · thurgh grace
of god almight;

Me thinketh of mete and drink · that I
have a sight.'

Adam lokede tho · under woode-bowgh,
 And whan he seyh mete · he was glad
 y-nough;
 For he hoped to god · for to have his deel,
 And he was sore alonged · after a good
 meel. 636
 As he seyde that word · the mayster out-
 lawe
 Saugh Gamelyn and Adam · under wood-
 schawe.
 ‘Yonge men,’ seyde the maister · ‘by the
 goode roode,
 I am war of gestes · god sende us non but
 goode; 640
 Yonder ben two yonge men · wonder wel
 a-dight,
 And paraventure ther ben mo · who-so
 lokede aright.
 Ariseth up, ye yonge men · and fetteth
 hem to me;
 It is good that we witen · what men they
 be.’
 Up ther sterten sevene · fro the diner,
 And metten with Gamelyn · and Adam
 spenser. 646
 Whan they were neyh hem · than seyde
 that oon,
 ‘Yeldeth up, yonge men · your bowes and
 your floon.’
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that yong was of
 elde,
 ‘Moche sorwe mot he have · that to you
 hem yelde! 650
 I curse non other · but right my-selve;
 They ye fette to yow fyve · thanne ye be
 twelve!’
 Tho they herde by his word · that might
 was in his arm,
 Ther was non of hem alle · that wolde do
 him harm,
 But sayde unto Gamelyn · mildely and
 stille, 655
 ‘Com afore our maister · and sey to him
 thy wille.’
 ‘Yonge men,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘by your
 lewte,
 What man is your maister · that ye with
 be?’
 Alle they answerde · withoute lesing,
 ‘Oure maister is y-crowned · of outlawes
 king.’ 660
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘go-we in Cristes
 name;

He may neyther mete nor drink · werne
 us, for schame.
 If that he be hende · and come of gentil
 blood,
 He wol yeve us mete and drink · and
 doon us som good.’
 ‘By seynt Iame!’ seyde Adam · ‘what
 harm that I gete, 665
 I wil aunte to the dore · that I hadde
 mete.’
 Gamelyn and Adam · wente forth in-
 feere,
 And they grette the maister · that they
 founde there.
 Than seide the maister · king of outlawes,
 ‘What seeke ye, yonge men · under
 woode-schawes?’ 670
 Gamelyn answerde · the king with his
 croune,
 ‘He moste needes walke in woode · that
 may not walke in townne.
 Sire, we walke not heer · noon harm for
 to do,
 But-if we meete with a deer · to scheete
 ther-to,
 As men that ben hungry · and mow no
 mete finde, 675
 And ben harde bistad · under woode-
 linde.’
 Of Gamelynes wordes · the maister hadde
 routhe,
 And seyde, ‘ye schal have y-nough · have
 god my trouthe!’
 He bad hem sitte ther adoun · for to take
 reste;
 And bad hem ete and drinke · and that
 of the beste. 680
 As they sete and eeten · and dronke wel
 and fyn,
 Than seyde that oon to that other ·
 ‘this is Gamelyn.’
 Tho was the maister outlawe · in-to coun-
 seil nome,
 And told how it was Gamelyn · that
 thider was y-come.
 Anon as he herde · how it was bifalle,
 He made him maister under him · over
 hem alle. 686
 Within the thridde wyke · him com tyding,
 To the maister outlawe · that tho was her
 king,
 That he schulde come hom · his pees was
 y-mad;

And of that goode tyding · he was tho ful
 glad. 690
 Tho seyde he to his yonge men · ‘soth
 for to telle,
 Meben comen tydinges · I may no lenger
 dwelle.’
 Tho was Gamelyn anon · withoute taryng,
 Maad maister outlawe · and crowned here
 king.
 Tho was Gamelyn crowned · king of
 outlawes, 695
 And walked a whyle · under woode-
 schawes.
 The false knight his brother · was scher-
 reve and sire,
 And leet his brother endite · for hate and
 for ire.
 Tho were his bonde-men · sory and noth-
 ing glad,
 When Gamelyn her lord · ‘wolves-heed’
 was cryed and maad; 700
 And sente out of his men · wher they
 might him finde,
 For to seke Gamelyn · under woodelinde,
 To telle him tydinges · how the wind was
 went,
 And al his good reved · and his men schent
 When they had him founde · on knees
 they hem sette, 705
 And a-doun with here hood · and here
 lord grette;
 ‘Sire, wraththe you nought · for the goode
 roode,
 For we have brought you tydinges · but
 they be nat goode.
 Now is thy brother scherreve · and hath
 the baillye,
 And he hath endited thee · and ‘wolves-
 heed’ doth thee crye.’ 710
 ‘Allas!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘that ever I
 was so slak
 That I ne hadde broke his nekke · tho I
 his rigge brak!
 Goth, greteth hem wel · myn housbondes
 and wyf,
 I wol ben atte nexte schire · have god
 my lyf!’
 Gamelyn com wel redy · to the nexte
 schire, 715
 And ther was his brother · bothe lord and
 sire.
 Gamelyn com boldelich · in-to the moot-
 halle,

And putte a-doun his hood · among the
 lordes alle;
 ‘God save you alle, lordinges · that now
 here be!
 But broke-bak scherreve · evel mot thou
 thee! 720
 Why hast thou do me · that schame and
 vilonye,
 For to late endite me · and ‘wolves-heed’
 me crye?’
 Tho thoughte the false knight · for to ben
 awreke,
 And leet take Gamelyn · moste he no
 more speke;
 Might ther be no more grace · but Game-
 lyn atte laste 725
 Was cast in-to prisoun · and fetered ful
 faste.
 Gamelyn hath a brother · that highte
 sir Ote,
 As good a knight and hende · as mighte
 gon on foote.
 Anon ther yede a messenger · to that
 goode knight,
 And tolde him al-togidere · how Gamelyn
 was dight. 730
 Anon as sire Ote herde · how Gamelyn
 was a-dight,
 He was wonder sory · was he no-thing
 light,
 And leet saddle a steede · and the way he
 nam,
 And to his tweyne bretheren · anon-right
 he cam.
 ‘Sire,’ seyde sire Ote · to the scherreve tho,
 ‘We ben but three bretheren · schul we
 never be mo; 736
 And thou hast y-prisoned · the beste of
 us alle;
 Swich another brother · yvel mot him
 bifalle!’
 ‘Sire Ote,’ seide the false knight · ‘lat be
 thy curs;
 By god, for thy wordes · he schal fare the
 wurs; 740
 To the kinges prisoun · anon he is
 y-nome,
 And ther he schal abyde · til the Iustice
 come.’
 ‘Parde!’ seyde sir Ote · ‘better it schal
 be;
 I bidde him to maynpris · that thou
 graunte him me

Til the nexte sitting · of deliver-
 aunce, 745
 And thanne lat Gamelyn · stande to his
 chaunce.’
 ‘Brother, in swich a forward · I take him
 to thee;
 And by thy fader soule · that thee bigat
 and me,
 But-if he be redy · when the Iustice sitte,
 Thou schalt bere the Iuggement · for al
 thy grete witte.’ 750
 ‘I graunte wel,’ seide sir Ote · ‘that it so
 be.
 Let deliver him anon · and tak him to
 me.’
 Tho was Gamelyn delivered · to sire Ote
 his brother,
 And that night dwellede · that on with
 that other.
 On the morn seyde Gamelyn · to sire Ote
 the hende, 755
 ‘Brother,’ he seide, ‘I moot · for sothe,
 from thee wende,
 To loke how my yonge men · leden here
 lyf,
 Whether they liven in Ioye · or elles in
 stryf.’
 ‘By god!’ seyde sire Ote · ‘that is a cold
 reed,
 Now I see that al the cark · schal fallen
 on myn heed; 760
 For when the Iustice sitte · and thou be
 nought y-founde,
 I schal anon be take · and in thy stede
 y-bounde.’
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘dismaye thee
 nought,
 For by seint Iame in Gales · that many
 man hath sought,
 If that god almighty · holde my lyf and
 wit, 765
 I wil be ther redy · when the Iustice sit.’
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn · ‘god
 schilde thee fro schame;
 Com when thou seest tyme · and bring us
 out of blame.’
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth
 you stille,
 And ye schul here how Gamelyn · hadde
 al his wille. 770
 Gamelyn wente ayein · under woode-rys,
 And fond there pleyng · yonge men of
 prys.

Tho was yong Gamelyn · glad and blithe
 y-nough,
 When he fond his mery men · under
 woode-bough.
 Gamelyn and his men · talkeden in-
 feere, 775
 And they hadde good game · here maister
 to heere;
 They tolden him of adventures · that they
 hadde founde,
 And Gamelyn hem tolde ayein · how he
 was fast y-bounde.
 Whyl Gamelyn was outlawed · hadde he
 no cors;
 There was no man that for him · ferde
 the wors, 780
 But abbotes and priours · monk and
 chanoun;
 On hem left he no-thing · when he mighte
 hem nom.
 Whyl Gamelyn and his men · made
 merthes ryve,
 The false knyght his brother · yvel mot he
 thryve!
 For he was fast aboute · bothe day and
 other, 785
 For to hyre the quest · to hangen his
 brother.
 Gamelyn stood on a day · and, as he bi-
 heeld
 The woodes and the schawes · in the
 wilde feeld,
 He thoughte on his brother · how he him
 beheet
 That he wolde be redy · when the Iustice
 seet; 790
 He thoughte wel that he wolde · withoute
 delay,
 Come afore the Iustice · to kepen his
 day,
 And seide to his yonge men · ‘dighteth
 you yare,
 For when the Iustice sitte · we moote be
 thare,
 For I am under borwe · til that I come,
 And my brother for me · to prisoun schal
 be nome.’ 796
 ‘By seint Iame!’ seyde his yonge men ·
 ‘and thou rede therto,
 Ordeyne how it schal be · and it schal be
 do.’
 Whyl Gamelyn was coming · ther the
 Iustice sat,

The false knight his brother · foryat he
 nat that, 800
 To hyure the men on his quest · to
 hangen his brother;
 Though he hadde nough that oon · he
 wolde have that other.
 Tho cam Gamelyn · fro under woode-rys,
 And broughte with him · his yonge men
 of prys.
 ‘I see wel,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘the
 Iustice is set; 805
 Go aforn, Adam · and loke how it spet.’
 Adam wente into the halle · and loked al
 aboute,
 He seyh there stonde · lordes grete and
 stoute,
 And sir Ote his brother · fetered wel
 fast;
 Tho went Adam out of halle · as he were
 agast. 810
 Adam said to Gamelyn · and to his felawes
 alle,
 ‘Sir Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-
 halle.’
 ‘Yonge men,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘this ye
 heeren alle;
 Sire Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-
 halle.
 If god yif us grace · wel for to doo, 815
 He schal it abegge · that broughte him
 ther-too.’
 Thanne sayde Adam · that lokkes hadde
 hore,
 ‘Cristes curs mote he have · that him
 bond so sore!
 And thou wilt, Gamelyn · do · after my
 reed,
 Ther is noon in the halle · schal bere
 away his heed.’ 820
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘we wiln nought
 don so,
 We wil slee the giltif · and lat the other
 go.
 I wil into the halle · and with the Iustice
 speke;
 On hem that ben gultif · I wil ben
 awreke.
 Lat non scape at the dore · take, yonge
 men, yeme; 825
 For I wil be Iustice this day · domes for
 to deme.
 God spede me this day · at my newe
 werk!

Adam, com on with me · for thou schalt
 be my clerk.’
 His men answered him · and bade him
 doon his best,
 ‘And if thou to us have neede · thou
 schalt finde us prest; 830
 We wiln stande with thee · whyl that we
 may dure,
 And but we werke manly · pay us non
 hure.’
 ‘Yonge men,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so mot I
 wel thee!
 As trusty a maister · ye schal finde of
 me.’
 Right there the Iustice · sat in the
 halle, 835
 In wente Gamelyn · amonges hem
 alle.
 Gamelyn leet unfetere · his brother out
 of bende.
 Thanne seyde sire Ote · his brother that
 was hende,
 ‘Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn · dwelled
 to longe,
 For the quest is oute on me · that I
 schulde honge.’ 840
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so god yif
 me good rest!
 This day they schuln ben hanged · that
 ben on thy quest;
 And the Iustice bothe · that is the Iugge-
 man,
 And the scherreve bothe · thurgh him it
 bigan.’
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the Ius-
 tise, 845
 ‘Now is thy power y-don · thou most
 nedes arise;
 Thow hast yeven domes · that ben yvel
 dight,
 I wil sitten in thy sete · and dresen hem
 aright.’
 The Iustice sat stille · and roos nought
 anoon;
 And Gamelyn cleved · [a-two] his cheeke-
 boon; 850
 Gamelyn took him in his arm · and no
 more spak,
 But threw him over the barre · and his
 arm to-brak.
 Durste non to Gamelyn · seye but good,
 For ferd of the company · that withoute
 stood.

Gamelyn sette him doun · in the Iustices
 seet, 855
 And sire Ote his brother by him · and
 Adam at his feet.
 Whan Gamelyn was y-set · in the Iustices
 stede,
 Herkneth of a bourde · that Gamelyn
 dede.
 He leet fetre the Iustice · and his false
 brother,
 And dede hem come to the barre · that
 oon with that other. 860
 Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon · hadde
 he no reste,
 Til he had enquired · who was on the
 queste
 For to deme his brother · sir Ote, for to
 honge;
 Er he wiste which they were · him
 thoughte ful longe.
 But as sone as Gamelyn · wiste wher they
 were, 865
 He dede hem everichone · feteren in-
 feere,
 And bringen hem to the barre · and sette
 hem in rewe;
 ‘By my faith!’ seyde the Iustice · ‘the
 scherreve is a schrewe!’
 Than seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise,
 ‘Thou hast y-yeve domes · of the wors
 assise; 870
 And the twelve sisours · that weren of
 the queste,
 They schul ben hanged this day · so have
 I good reste!’
 Thanne seide the scherreve · to yonge
 Gamelyn,
 ‘Lord, I crye the mercy · brother art
 thou myn.’
 ‘Therefore,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘have thou
 Cristes curs, 875
 For, and thou were maister · yit I schulde
 have wors.’
 For to make short tale · and nought to
 tarie longe,
 He ordeyned him a queste · of his men
 so stronge;

The Iustice and the scherreve · bothe
 honged hye,
 To weyven with the ropes · and with the
 winde drye; 880
 And the twelve sisours · (sorwe have that
 rekke!)
 Alle they were hanged · faste by the
 nekke.
 Thus ended the false knight · with his
 treccherye,
 That ever hadde y-lad his lyf · in falsnes
 and folye.
 He was hanged by the nekke · and nought
 by the purs; 885
 That was the meede that he hadde · for
 his fadres curs.
 Sire Ote was eldest · and Gamelyn was
 ying,
 They wenten with here · frendes even to
 the king;
 They made pees with the king · of the
 best assise.
 The king loved wel sir Ote · and made
 him Iustise. 890
 And after, the king made Gamelyn ·
 bothe in est and west,
 Chief Iustice · of al his free forest;
 Alle his wighte yonge men · the king
 foryaf here gilt,
 And sitthen in good office · the king hem
 hath y-pilt.
 Thus won Gamelyn · his lond and his
 leede, 895
 And wrak him of his enemys · and quitte
 hem here meede;
 And sire Ote his brother · made him his
 heir,
 And sitthen wedded Gamelyn · a wyf
 bothe good and feyr;
 They livenen to-gidere · whyl that Crist
 wolde,
 And sitthen was Gamelyn · graven under
 molde. 900
 And so schal we alle · may ther no man
 flee:
 God bringe us to the Ioye · that ever
 schal be!

GLOSSARIAL INDEX.



The Tales are referred to by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, the various groups into which the Tales are divided. Thus, C 8 indicates Group C, line 8.

Abbreviations. — The grammatical abbreviations *s.*, *adj.*, and *adv.*, for substantive, adjective, and adverb, will be readily understood. Special abbreviations are *v.*, verb in the infinitive; *pr. s.* (and *pt. s.*) mean the *third* person singular of the present (and past) tense, except when 1 or 2 (first person or second person) is prefixed; *pr. pl.* (and *pt. pl.*) mean likewise the *third* person plural of the present (and past) tense; *imp. s.* means second person singular of the imperative mood; and *imp. pl.* second person plural of the same.

A.

A, *art.* a; *al a*, the whole of a, E 1165.
A, *prep.* on, in, for; *a-night*, in the night, by night, G 880; *now a dayes*, now in these days, E 1164; *a-morwe*, A 822; *a Goddes name*, in God's name, A 854.
Abak, *adv.* backwards, B 2017.
Abashed, *pp.* ashamed, disconcerted, B 568.
Abayst, **Abaysed**, *pp.* abashed, disconcerted, E 317; amazed, E 1108.
Abbey, *s.* abbey, B 1814.
Abegge, *v.* atone for, A 3938.
Abhominaciouns, *s. pl.* abominations, horrible occurrences, B 88.
Abit, *pr. s.* (*for* abideth), abides, G 1175.
Able, *adj.* fit, capable, adapted, A 167.
Ablucions, *s. pl.* ablutions, washings, G 856.
Aboght. See **Abye**.
Abood, *s.* abiding, delay, A 965.
Abouten, *prep.* about, around, near, E 1106.
Aboven, *prep.* above, E 826.
Abrayde. See **Abreyde**.
Abreyde, *pt. s.* started, awoke, E 1061.
Abroche, *v.* broach, D 177.
Abrood, *adv.* abroad, *i.e.* wide open, F 441.
Abusioun, *s.* deceit, B 214.
Abyde, *v.* to remain, wait, E 1106; **Abydeth**, *imp. pl.* B 1175; **Abyding**, *pr. pt.* awaiting, E 757.
Abye, *v.* pay for, C 756; **Aboght**, *pp.* redeemed, atoned for, C 503.
Accident, *s.* unusual appearance, E 607; outward appearance, C 539.
Accidie, *s.* moral sloth, I 677.
Accordaunt, *adj.* agreeable to, A 37.
Accorde, *pr. s. subj.* may agree, G 638.
Achat, *s.* buying, A 571.

Achatours, *s.* buyers, A 568.
Acorden, *pr. pl.* agree, B 2137; **Acording**, *pr. pt.* agreeing, B 1737. See **Accorde**.
Acoute, *v.* consider, B 3591.
Acquyte, *v.* acquit one's self, E 936; **Acquiteth**, *imp. pl.* B 37.
Acustomaunce, *s.* system of habits, habitual method of life; *had of acustomaunce*, was accustomed, B 3701.
Adamant, *s.* ironstone, A 1990.
Adoun, *adv.* at the bottom, G 779; down, B 3630.
Advertence, *s.* attention, G 467.
Aferd, *pp.* afraid, A 628.
Affecioun, *s.* desire, A 1158.
Affray, *s.* fear, terror, B 1137.
Affyle, *v.* polish, A 712.
After, *prep.* in expectation of, for, B 467; *after me*, according to my command, E 327; *after the yeer*, according to the time of year, F 47.
Agayn, *prep.* against, B 580; near, G 1279; to meet, B 391; **Ageyn**, against, F 142.
Agayns, *prep.* towards, to meet, E 911; before, in presence of, C 743.
Agaynward, *adv.* back again, B 441.
Ages, *pl.* times, periods, B 3177.
Aggreggeth, *v.* aggravates, B 2477; **Agreggeden**, *pp.* aggravated, B 2209.
Agoon, *pp.* passed away, dead, E 631; **Agon**, *pp.* gone away, C 810; **Agoon**, *pp. as adv.* ago, C 436.
Agreved, *pp.* aggrieved, E 500.
Agrief, *adv.* sorrowfully, B 4083.
Aken, *pr. pl.* ache, B 2113.
Aketoun, *s.* a short sleeveless tunic, worn under the hauberk, B 2050.

- Al**, *adv.* completely, B 3215; *al blood*, completely covered with blood, B 1967.
Al, *adj.* all; *al a*, the whole of, G 996; *at al*, in every respect, E 1222; wholly, C 633; *Alle*, *pl.* B 118; *alle and some*, one and all, E 941.
Al, *conj.* whether, G 846; although, E 99; *al so* as, H 80.
Alaunts, *s.* boarhounds, A 2148.
Alayes, *s. pl.* alloy, E 1167.
Albificacioun, *s.* albification, whitening, G 805.
Alday, *adv.* continually, F 481; always, B 1702.
Ale and breed, drink and meat, B 2062.
Alembyses, *pl.* alembics, G 794.
Alestake, *s.* a stake projecting from an alehouse by way of a sign, A 667.
Aley, *s.* an alley, B 1758.
Algate, *adv.* at any rate, C 292; G 318; in all respects, E 855.
Algates, *adv.* at any rate, in every way, wholly, F 246; nevertheless, all the same, at any rate, B 520; G 1096.
Alkamistre, *s.* alchemist, G 1204.
Aller, *gen. pl.* of *Al*, A 823.
Alliaunce, *s.* marriage, espousal, E 357.
Allow, 1 *pr. s.* I approve, I applaud, F 676.
Allye, *s.* relative, B 3593.
Almesse, *s.* alms, B 168.
Almest, *adv.* almost, B 1948.
Al-so, *conj.* as, B 396; H 80.
Alswa, *adv.* also, A 4085.
Alwey, *adv.* continually, always, E 458; ceaselessly, F 422; I 11.
Am, *it am I*, it is I, B 1109.
Amadrides, *s. pl.* hamadryads, A 2928.
Amalgaming, *s.* the formation of an amalgam, G 771.
Amased, *pp.* amazed, G 935.
Ambel, *s.* amble; *an ambel*, in an amble, at an ambling pace, B 2075.
Ambes as, double aces, B 124.
Amblere, *s.* easy-paced horse, A 469.
Amende, *v.* to improve, F 197; *Amended*, *pp.* surpassed, B 3444.
Amenuse, *v.* diminish, I 360; depreciate, I 496.
Amerciments, *s. pl.* fines, I 752.
Ameved, *pt. s.* moved, changed; *nought ameved*, changed not, altered not, E 498; *Amoeved*, *pp.* perturbed, I 670.
Amidde, *prep.* amid, in the midst of, F 409.
Amis, *adv.* wrongly, B 3370.
Amonesten, *v.* warn, admonish, I 76.
Amonges, *prep.* amongst, B 3344; G 608.
Amounteth, *pr. s.* means, B 569; amounts to, F 108.
Amy, *s.* friend, C 318.
An, a; *an eighte bussshels*, a quantity equal to eight bushels, C 771.
And, *conj.* if, E 2433.
Anhanged, *pp.* hung, B 3945, 3949.
Anientissed, *pp.* annihilated, B 2438.
A-night, *adv.* by night, at night, E 464.
Anlas, *s.* dagger, A 357.
Annexed, *pp.* attached, C 482.
Annueleer, *s.* a priest who received annual payments, a chaplain, G 1012.
Annunciat, *pp.* pre-announced, *ie* whose birth was foretold, B 3205.
Anon, *adv.* immediately, forthwith, B 34, 326; C 864.
Anon-right, *adv.* immediately, G 1141.
Anoyeth, *pr. s. impers.* it annoys, vexes, G 1036.
Answerde, *pt. s.* answered, E 21.
Antem, *s.* anthem, B 1850.
Antiphoner, *s.* anthem-book, B 1709.
Aornement, *s.* adornment, I 432.
Appalled. See **Appalled**.
Aparaile. See **Apparaile**.
Aperceyve. See **Aperceyve**.
Apayd, **Apayed**, *pp.* pleased, satisfied; *evel apayd*, ill-pleased, G 921.
Apayre. See **Apeyren**.
Apayse. See **Apese**.
Ape, *s.* dupe, G 1313.
Apeiren. See **Apeyren**.
Aperceyve, *v.* to perceive, E 600; **Aperceyveth**, *pr. s.* E 1018.
Aperceyvinges, *pl.* perceptions, observations, F 286.
Apert, **Aperte**, *adv.* openly, F 531.
Apertenant, *adj.* belonging to, such as belongs to; **Apertenaut**, B 3505.
Apertenen, *v.* belong to, I 410.
Apertening, *pr. pt.* appertaining, G 785.
Apertinent, *adj.* appertaining, suitable, E 1010.
Apertly, *adv.* openly, clearly, I 294.
Apese, **Apeise**, *v.* appease, pacify, E 433; H 98.
Apeyren, *v.* impair, depreciate, I 1078; A 3147.
Apeyse. See **Apese**.
Apposed. See **Apposed**.
Apostelles, *s. pl.* apostles, G 1002.
Appalled, *pp.* made pale or feeble, F 365; B 1292.
Apparaile, *s.* apparel, attire, E 1208.
Apparence, *s.* appearance, seeming, F 218.
Appese. See **Apese**.
Apposed, *pt. s.* questioned, G 363.
Approved, *pp.* approved, E 1349.
Approwours, *s. pl.* informers, D 1343.
Apyked, *pp.* trimmed, A 365.
Arace, *v.* eradicate, tear away, E 1103.
Aray, *s.* order, E 262; ordinance, E 670.
Arayed, *pp.* dressed, F 389; arranged, ordered, B 252.
Arches. See **Ark**.
Archewyves, *s. pl.* archwives, ruling wives, E 1195.

Arest, *s.* socket of a spear, A 2602.
Arette, *v.* account, attribute, A 726; *Aretted*,
pp. A 2729.
Arewé, *adv.* in a row, D 1254.
Argoile, *s.* potter's clay, G 813.
Argumenten, *pr. pl.* argue, B 212.
Arignt, *adv.* rightly, properly, F 694.
Arist, *pr. s.* arises, B 265.
Ark, *s.* arc, referring to the arc of the horizon
 extending from sunrise to sunset, B 2.
Arminge, *s.* arming, putting on of armor, B 2037.
Armipotente, *adj.* mighty in arms, A 2441.
Armlees, *adj.* armless, without an arm, B 3393.
Armoniak, *adj.* ammoniac; applied to *bole*, G
 790, and *sal*, G 798.
Armoure, *s.* armor, B 2009.
Arn, *pr. pl.* are, E 342.
Arrace. See *Arace*.
Array, *Arraye*. See *Aray*, *Arayed*.
Arrette. See *Arette*.
Ars-metrik, *s.* arithmetic, A 1898.
Art, *s.* kind, sort, E 1241.
Arwes, *pl.* arrows, A 107.
As, like, B 1864; expletive, expressing a wish; *as*
have, may *He have*, B 1061; *as lat*, pray let,
 B 859; *as after*, according to, B 3555; *as in*,
i. e. for, B 3688; *as now*, at this time, F 652; on
 the present occasion, G 944; for the present,
 with the matter on hand, G 1019; *as to*, with
 reference to, F 107; as soon as, F 615; *as fer-*
forth as, as far as, B 19. *As* is short for *Also*.
As, *s.* an ace, B 3851; *ambes as*, double aces, B
 124.
Assay. See *Assay*.
Ascaunce, *adv.* perhaps, G 838.
Ascencioun, *s.* ascension, rising up, G 778.
Ascende, *v.* ascend, rise (a term in astrology),
 I 11; *pr. pt.* ascending, in the ascendant, *i. e.*
 near the eastern horizon, F 264.
Ascendent, *s.* ascendant, A 417. The ascen-
 dent is (properly) that point of the zodiacal
 circle which is seen to be just ascending above
 the horizon at a given moment.
Asken, *v.* to ask, B 101.
Aslake, *v.* abate, A 3553; *pp.* A 1760.
Asonder, *adv.* asunder, apart, B 1157.
Asp, *s.* aspen, A 2921.
Aspye, *s.* spy, C 755.
Assaille, *v.* to assail, attack, B 3953.
Assay, *s.* trial, D 290; *Assayes*, *pl.* trials, E 697.
Assaye, *imp. s.* let him try, E 1229; *Assayed*,
pp. tried, E 1054.
Asseged, *pp.* besieged, A 881.
Assembled, *pp.* united, G 50.
Assendent. See *Ascendent*.
Assent, *s.* consent, conspiracy, C 758.
Assente, *v.* agree to, A 374; *Assenten*, *pr. pl.*
 assent, agree, E 176.

Assoilen, *pr. s.* absolve, pardon, C 913.
Assailing, *s.* absolution, A 661.
Assured, *pt. s.* confirmed, B 3378.
Assyse, *s.* assize, A 314.
Asterted, *pt. s.* escaped, B 437.
Astonied, *pt. s.* astonished, E 316.
Astored, *pp.* stored, provided, A 609.
Astromye, *s.* astronomy, A 3451.
Asure, azure, blue, E 254.
Aswage, *v.* to assuage, B 3834.
Aswowne, in a swoon, E 1079.
At, *prep.* at; *at me*, with me, with respect to
 me, B 1975; from, E 653; from, of, G 542, 621.
At-after, *prep.* after, F 302.
Atake, *v.* to overtake, G 556.
Atazir, *s.* evil influence, B 305.
Atones, *adv.* at once, at one and the same
 time, B 670.
Atoon, *adv.* at one, E 437.
At-rede, *v.* outwit, surpass in advice, A 2449.
At-renne, *v.* outrun, A 2449.
Attamed, *pp.* broached, B 4008.
Atte; *atte fulle*, at the full, in completeness,
 B 203; *atte laste*, at the last, B 506; *atte leste*,
 at the least, at least, E 130.
Attayne, *v.* to attain, E 447.
Attry, *adj.* venomous, I 583.
Atwinne, *adv.* apart, G 1170.
A-two, *adv.* in two, asunder, B 600.
Auctor. See *Auctor*.
Auctoritee, *s.* authority, especially of an es-
 teemed writer, D 1.
Auctour, *s.* author, E 1141.
Audience, *s.* audience, B 3991; hearing, E 329.
Aught, *adv.* by any chance, in any way, B
 1034; at all, G 597.
Augrim stones, arithmetical counters, A 3210.
Auntred, *pt. s.* adventured, A 4205.
Auntrous, *adj.* adventurous, B 2099.
Autour. See *Auctour*.
Avale, *v.* doff, A 3122.
Avantage, *s.* convenience, profit; *to don his*
avantage, to suit his own interests, B 729; *as*
adj. advantageous, B 146.
Avaunce, *v.* profit, A 246; *Avaunced*, *pp.* ad-
 vanced, C 410.
Avaunt, *s.* vaunt, boast, A 227.
Aventure, *s.* peril, B 1151; *Aventures*, *pl.* ad-
 ventures, E 15; accidents, C 934.
Avys, *s.* opinion, I 54.
Avyse, *v. refl.* consider, B 664.
Await, *s.* watch, H 149; *have hir in awayt*,
 watch her, B 3915.
Awaiteth, *pr. s.* waits, watches, B 1776.
Awaytes. See *Await*.
Awen, *adj.* own, A 4239.
Aweye, *adv.* away, gone; from home, B 593;
 astray, B 609.

Awroken, *pp.* avenge, A 3752.

Ayeins, *prep.* against, E 320.

Ayel, s. grandfather, A 2477.

B.

Ba, *imp. s.* kiss, A 3709.

Bachelrye, s. company of young men, E 270.

Bad, *pt. s.* bade, E 373. See Bidde.

Badde, *adj.* bad; Badder, F 224.

Bak, s. cloth for the back, coarse mantle, cloak, G 881.

Bake, *pp.* baked, B 95.

Balkes, s. *pl.* beams; the transverse beams beneath the roof, A 3626.

Balled, *adj.* bald, A 198.

Banes, *pl.* bones, A 4073.

Bar. See Bere.

Barbre, *adj.* barbarian, B 281.

Bareyne, *adj.* barren, B 68; E 448.

Barm-clooth, s. apron, A 3236.

Barme, s. *dat.* bosom, lap, B 3256, 3630.

Baronage, s. company of barons, retinue of lords, B 329.

Barres, s. *pl.* cross-stripes, A 329.

Barringe, s. cross-striping, I 417.

Basilicok, s. basilisk, I 853.

Bataille, s. battle, B 3879; G 386.

Batailled, *pp.* battlemented, indented, B 4050.

Bathe, *adj.* both, A 4087.

Bauderie, s. gayety, A 1926.

Baudy, *adj.* dirty, G 635.

Bawdrik, s. baldrick, belt, A 116.

Bayard, a horse's name, G 1413.

Bayte, *v.* to bait, feed, eat, B 466; Baiteth, *pr. s.* feeds, B 2103.

Bechen, *adj.* made of beech, G 1160.

Bed, s. station, B 3862.

Bede, *v.* offer, proffer, G 1065; 1 *pt. pl.* directed, I 65. *Pl. pl. and pp.* of Bidde. See Bidde.

Bedes, *pl.* beads, A 159.

Bedrede, *adj.* bedridden, E 1292.

Beek, s. beak, F 418.

Been, *pl.* bees, F 204.

Beest, s. beast, F 460; *beest roial*, royal beast, *i.e.* Leo, F 264.

Beggistere, s. beggar (female beggar), A 242.

Bekke, 1 *pr. s.* I nod, C 396.

Bel amy, *i.e.* good friend, fair friend, C 318.

Bely, s. bellows, I 351.

Bely-naked, *adj.* stark naked, E 1326.

Bemes, s. *pl.* trumpets, B 4588.

Ben, Been, *v. be*; Beth, *imp. pl.* be ye, C 683.

Bendinge, s. slant-striping, I 417.

Bene, s. bean, B 94.

Benedicite, bless ye, B 1170.

Bent, s. grassy slope; Bente, *dat.* A 1981.

Berafte. See Bireve.

Berd, s. beard, A 332; *make a berd*, outwit, A 4096.

Bere, *v.* bear, carry, B 3564; transport, F 119; to carry about, F 148; Bereth, *pr. s.* B 2091; Berth, *sickly berth*, take with ill will, dislike, E 625; *berth hir on hond*, bears false witness against her, B 620; Ber, *pt. s.* bore, B 722.

Bereve. See Bireve.

Berie, *v.* bury, C 884.

Beringe, s. bearing, behavior, B 2022.

Berm, s. barm, *i.e.* yeast, G 813.

Bern, Berne, s. barn, B 3759; C 397.

Besy. See Bisy.

Bete, *pp.* beaten; Beten, B 1732.

Bete, *v.* kindle, A 2253; Betten, *pt. pl.* kindled, G 518.

Beth, *pr. pl.* arc, B 2350.

Beye, *v.* buy, C 845.

Bibbed, *pp.* drunk, A 4162.

Bible, s. book, G 857.

Bi-bledde, *pp.* bloodied, A 2002.

Bicched bones, s. *pl.* dice, C 656.

Bi-clappe, *ger.* to clasp, ensnare, G 9.

Bidaffed, *pp.* befooled, E 1191.

Bidde, *v.* to bid, F 327; *pp.* bidden, commanded, B 440.

Biddinge, *pr. pt.* praying, G 140.

Biden, *pp.* of Byde.

Bifalle, *pr. s. subj.* may befall, I 68; *pp.* befallen, B 726; Bifalleth, *pr. s.* happens, E 449; Bifel, *pt. s.* it came to pass, F 42; Bifil, B 3613; Bifelle, *pt. s. subj.* were to befall, E 136.

Biforn, *adv.* before, B 704; before, in anticipation, B 1668; beforehand, B 1184; of old time, F 551; Bifore, first, E 446.

Biforn, *prep.* before, B 997; C 665; in front of, G 680; Biforen, B 3553.

Biforn-hond, *adv.* beforehand, G 1317.

Bigan, *pt. s.* began, B 98, 1883.

Bigyle, *v.* to beguile, deceive, E 252.

Bigyleres, *pl.* beguilers, I 299.

Biheste, s. promise, B 37; F 698.

Bihete, *v.* promise; 1 *pr. s.* I promise, G 707. See Bihote.

Biholde, *pp.* beheld, G 179.

Bihote, *v.* promise, A 1854.

Bijaped, *pp.* tricked, A 1585.

Biknowe, *v.* acknowledge, B 886.

Bile, s. beak, B 4051.

Bileve, s. belief, faith, G 63.

Bileve, *v.* to remain, stay behind, F 583.

Bileveth, *imp. pl.* believe ye, G 1047.

Biraft. See Bireve.

Bireve, *v.* bereave, B 3359; take away, G 482; Biraft, *pt. s.* bereft, took away, B 3386.

Biseged, *pp.* besieged, B 3514.

Biseke, *v.* beseech, B 3174; Bisekinge, beseeching, E 178, 592.

Bisemare, *s.* abusiveness, A 3965.
Bisette, *pt. s.* employed, A 279.
Biseye, *pp.* displayed, made apparent; *yvel biseye*, ill-looking, E 965; *richely biseye*, rich-looking, splendid, E 984.
Bisie, *v.* to trouble, busy; *bisie me*, employ myself, G 758.
Bisily, *adv.* busily, F 88.
Bisnesse, *s.* diligence, E 1008; busy endeavor, G 24; *Bisynesse*, F 642. See **Busnesse**.
Bismotered, *pp.* soiled, A 76.
Bistad, *pp.* hard bestead, greatly imperilled, B 649.
Bistrood, *pt. s.* bestrode, B 2093.
Bisy, *adj.* busy, attentive, F 509.
Bisyde, *prep.* beside, E 777, 1105; F 374.
Bit, *pr. s.* bids, F 291.
Bitake, 1 *pr. s.* commend, commit, E 161; *Bitook*, *pt. s.* delivered, gave, committed (to the charge of), G 541.
Biteche, *pr. s.* commit to, B 2114.
Bitid, *pp.* befallen, B 1949. See **Bityde**.
Bitokneth, *pr. s.* betokens, signifies, B 3942.
Bitook. See **Bitake**.
Bitore, *s.* bittern, D 972.
Bitrayed, *pp.* betrayed, B 3570.
Bitwixen, *prep.* between, C 832; *Bitwixe*, B 3830; *Bitwix*, F 317.
Bityde, *v.* befall, E 79; happen, arrive, B 3730; *pr. s. subj.* may betide, E 306; *bityde what bityde*, let that happen that may, whatever may happen, B 2064.
Bitymes, *adv.* betimes, soon, G 1008.
Biwailen, *v.* to bewail, lament, B 26; *Biwaille*, B 3952; *Biwailled*, *pp.* E 530.
Biwreye, *v.* to bewray, unfold, reveal, B 3219; *Biwreyen*, betray, G 150; *Biwreyest*, dis-closest, B 773.
Bladdre, *s.* bladder, G 439.
Blake, *adj. pl.* black, G 557.
Blakeberied, *a*, a-blackberrying, *i.e.* a-wandering at will, astray, C 406.
Blaked, *pp.* blackened, rendered black, B 3321.
Blankmanger, *s.* blanc-mange, A 387.
Blere, *v.* blind, A 4049.
Blered, *adj.* bleared, G 730.
Blesseth hir, *pr. s.* crosses herself, B 449.
Blinne, *v.* stop, cease, G 1171.
Blisful, *adj.* blessed, B 845; happy, merry, E 844, 1121.
Blisse, *v.* bless, E 553.
Blondren. See **Blundreth**.
Blood, *s.* progeny, offspring, E 632.
Blowe, *pp.* blown, filled out with wind, G 440.
Blundreth, *pr. s.* runs heedlessly, G 1414; *Blondren*, 1 *pr. pl.* we fall into confusion, we confuse ourselves, become mazed, G 670.

Blynde with, *ger.* to blind (the priest) with, G 1151.
Bobance, *s.* presumption, boast, D 569.
Bocher, *s.* butcher, A 2025.
Boden, *pp.* of *Bede*.
Body, *s.* principal subject, E 42; my body, myself, B 1185; *pl.* metallic bodies (metals), answering to celestial bodies (planets), G 820.
Boes, *pr. s.* it behooves, A 4027.
Boist, *s.* box, C 307.
Boistous, *adj.* rough, H 211.
Boistously, *adv.* loudly, E 791.
Bokeler, *s.* buckler, A 112, 3266.
Bokes, *pl.* books, B 3499.
Boket, *s.* bucket, A 1533.
Bole armoniak, Armenian clay, G 790.
Bolle, *s.* a bowl, G 1210.
Bond, *s.* a band, F 131.
Boon, *s.* bone, B 3090.
Boor, *s.* boar, B 3299.
Boost, *s.* boast, pride, B 3289. See **Bost**.
Boot, *pt. s.* bit, B 3791.
Boot, *s.* boat, E 1424.
Boras, *s.* borax, A 630; G 790.
Bord, *s.* table, B 430; board, *i.e.* meals, G 1017.
Bordels, *s. pl.* brothels, I 885.
Bore, *pp.* born, E 401; borne, carried, F 178; *Born*, borne, E 444; carried, F 176; worn, F 43.
Bore, **Boren**, *pp.* of *Bere*.
Borel, *adj.* coarse, common, B 3145.
Bores. See **Boor**.
Borwe, *v.* borrow, B 105.
Bost, *s.* pride, swelling, G 441. See **Boost**.
Bote, *s.* safety, salvation, B 1656; relief, G 1481.
Botel, *s.* bottle (of hay), H 14.
Boterflye, *s.* butterfly, B 3980.
Botme, *s. dat.* bottom, G 1321.
Bought, **Boughte**, *pt. s.* bought; *boughte agayn*, redeemed, C 766.
Bouk, *s.* body, A 2746.
Bour, *s.* inner room, B 4022.
Bourde, *s.* jest, H 81.
Boydekyns, *s. pl.* poniards, lit. bodkins, B 3892.
Bracer, *s.* arm-guard, A 111.
Bragot, *s.* ale and mead, A 3261.
Brak, *pt. s.* broke, B 288. *Pt. t.* of *Breken*.
Branched, *adj.* full of branches, F 159.
Brast, **Braste**. See **Breste**.
Braun, *s.* muscle, A 546.
Brayde. See **Breyde**.
Brede, *s.* breadth, B 3350.
Breech, *s.* breeches, B 2049; C 948.
Breed, *s.* bread, B 3624; F 614.
Breke, *v.* break, C 936; *breke his day*, fail to pay at the appointed time, G 1040; *Breke*, *imp. s.* interrupt, I 24.
Breme, *adv.* fierce, A 1699.

Bren, *s.* bran, A 4053.
Brest, *s.* breast, E 617.
Breste, *v.* burst, break, E 1169; *Braste*, *pl.* B 671.
Bret-ful, *adj.* brimful, A 687.
Bretherhed, *s.* brotherhood, religious order, A 511.
Brew, *pt. s.* brewed, contrived, B 3575.
Breyde, *v.* start suddenly, awake, F 477; *pt. s.* started, went (out of his wits), B 3728; *drew*, B 837.
Brige, *s.* quarrel, B 2870.
Brighte, *adv.* brightly, B 11, 2034.
Brike, *s.* a perilous state, ruin, downfall, B 3580.
Bringen, *v.* bring, B 3623.
Brocage, *s.* brokery, jobbery, A 3375.
Brode, *adj. pl.* broad, thick, B 3448. See **Brood**.
Brode, *adv.* broadly; wide awake, G 1420.
Broken. See **Brēke**.
Brokkinge, *pr. pl.* warbling, A 3377.
Bron, *s.* firebrand, B 3224; *Bronde*, *dat.* a piece of hot metal on the anvil, B 2095.
Brood, *adj.* broad, thick, large, F 82. See **Brode**.
Brosten. See **Breste**.
Brouded, *pp.* embroidered, B 3659.
Brouke, *v.* enjoy, use, B 4490.
Browdinge, *s.* embroidery, A 2498.
Bryberyes, *s. pl.* rascalities, D 1367.
Brydel, *s.* bridle, F 340.
Buk, *s.* buck; *Bukke*, B 1946; *blow the bukkes horn*, have trouble for nothing, A 3387.
Bulle, *s.* papal bull, C 909.
Bulte, *v.* sift, B 4430; *pt. s.* built, A 1548.
Burdoun, *s.* bass, A 673.
Burel, *adj.* coarse, common, D 1872.
Buriels, *s. pl.* burial-places, *i.e.* the catacombs, G 186.
Busnesse, *s.* business, industry, G 5. See **Bisnesse**.
Busk, *s.* bush, *pl.* A 1579.
Buxom, *adj.* obedient, B 1432.
Buxomly, *adv.* obediently, E 186.
By, *v.* to buy; *go by*, go to buy, G 1294. See **Beye**.
By and by, *adv.* side by side, in order, A 1011.
Byte, *v.* bite, B 3634; to sting, F 513; to cut deeply, F 158.

C.

Cacche, *v.* catch, G 11.
Cake, *s.* loaf, C 322.
Calcening, *s.* calcination, G 771.
Calcinacioun, *s.* calcination, G 804.
Calle, *s.* head-dress, D 1018.
Cam, *pt. s.* came, F 81.
Camaille, *s.* camel, E 1196.

Camuse, *adj.* flat, A 3934.
Canevas, *s.* canvas, G 939.
Canon, *s.* the "Canon," the title of a book by Avicenna, C 890.
Canstow, *for* Canst thou, B 632.
Cartel, *s.* portion, A 3008.
Capel, *s.* horse, nag, H 64.
Capitayn, *s.* captain, C 582.
Cardiacle, *s.* pain about the heart, C 313.
Care, *s.* anxiety, trouble, B 514.
Care, *v.* feel anxiety, E 1212.
Carf, *pt. s.* carved, cut, B 3647.
Carie, *v.* to carry, E 585; *Carien*, *pr. pl.* carry, B 1814; *Carieden*, *pt. pl.* carried, G 1219.
Carl, *s.* churl, country fellow, C 717.
Carpe, *v.* chatter, A 194.
Carrik, *s.* ship of burden, D 1688.
Cas, *s.* case, occasion, B 36; circumstance, state, condition, B 123; chance, hap, E 316; *to deyen in the cas*, though death were the result, E 859.
Casteth, *pr. s.* considers, G 1414; *refl.* casts himself, devotes himself, G 738; *Casten*, *pr. pl.* cast about, debate, B 212.
Catel, *s.* chattels, A 373.
Caughte, *pt. s.* took, conceived, E 619; *Caught*, *pp.* obtained, E 1110.
Cause, *s.* reason, B 252; *cause why*, the reason why is this, E 2435.
Causen, *pr. pl.* cause, F 452.
Cautif, *s.* wretch, wretched or unfortunate man, B 3269.
Celerer, *s.* keeper of a cellar, B 3126.
Ceptre, *s.* sceptre, B 3334.
Cered, *pp. as adj.* waxed, G 808.
Cerial ook, *s.* holm oak, A 2290.
Cerimonies, *s. pl.* ceremonious acts, acts of courtship, F 515.
Ceriously, *adv.* minutely, with full details, B 185.
Certein, *adj.* a certain quantity of; *certein gold*, a stated sum of money, B 242; *certein tresor*, a quantity of treasure, B 442; *Certeyn*, a certain sum, a fixed quantity, G 776.
Certes, *adv.* certainly, G 1478.
Ceruce, *s.* white lead, A 630.
Cese. See **Cesse**.
Cesse, *v.* cease, B 1066.
Cetewale, *s.* either, (1) zedoary, or (2) the herb valerian, B 1951.
Ceynt, *s.* girdle, A 2335.
Chaffare, *s.* merchandise; *hence*, matter, subject, E 2438.
Chaffare, *ger.* to trade, barter, deal, traffic, B 139.
Chalk-stoon, *s.* a piece of chalk, G 1207.
Chalons, *s.* coverlets from Chalons, A 4140.
Chamberere, *s.* maidservant, chambermaid, E 819.

- Champartye**, *s.* partnership, A 1949.
Chanon, *s.* canon, G 573; Chanoun, G 972.
Chapeleyne, *s.* nun who said minor offices, A 164.
Chapmanhode, *s.* trade, barter, B 143.
Chapmen, *s. pl.* traders, merchants, B 135.
Char, *s.* car, chariot, F 671.
Charboacle, *s.* carbuncle (a precious stone), B 2061.
Charge, *s.* responsibility, E 163; *of that no charge*, for that no matter, it is of no importance, G 749.
Chargeant, *adj.* burdensome, B 2433.
Chasted, *pp.* chastened, taught, F 491.
Chasteyn, *s.* chestnut, A 1921.
Chastyse. See **Chasted**.
Chance, *s.* luck. G 593; "chance," a technical term in the game of hazard, C 653.
Change, *s.* change, exchange, F 535.
Chaunterie, *s.* endowment for singing masses for the dead, A 510.
Cheek, *s.* cheek, *i.e.* cheekbone, B 3228.
Chees, *pt. s.* chose, B 3706.
Cheeste, *s.* strife, I 556.
Cherche, *s.* a church, G 546.
Chere, *s.* entertainment, B 180; show, E 678; kindly expression, E 1112.
Cherl, *s.* churl, C 289.
Cheryce, *v.* cherish; Cherissheth, *imp. pl.* cherish ye, F 353.
Chesinge, *s.* choosing, choice, E 162.
Cheste, *s.* coffin, E 29.
Chevauchee. See **Chivachee**.
Cheve, *v.*; *yvel mote he cheve*, ill may he end, or ill may he thrive, G 1225.
Chiertee, *s.* dearness, B 1526; affection, F 881.
Chiknes, *pl.* chickens, A 380.
Child, *s.* child, a term of address to a young man, B 2000.
Childhede, *s. dat.* childhood, B 1691.
Chilindre, *s.* pocket sun-dial, B 1396.
Chimbe, *s.* rim of the barrel, A 3895.
Chirche, *s.* church, A 460.
Chirche-hawes, *s. pl.* churchyards, I 801.
Chirketh, *pr. s.* twitters, D 1804.
Chirking, *s.* murmuring, A 2004.
Chit, *pr. s.* chides, G 921.
Chiteren, *v.* chatter, prattle, G 1397.
Chivachee, *s.* feat of horsemanship, H 50.
Chivachye, *s.* expedition, A 85.
Chivalrye, *s.* chivalry, company of knights, B 235; troops of horse, cavalry, B 3871.
Choy, *s.* choice, E 170.
Chyde, *v.* chide, complain, F 649.
Ciclatoun, *s.* a costly kind of thin cloth, B 1924.
Cink, *num.* cinque, five, C 653.
Cipres, *s.* cypress; Ciprees, B 2071.
Citee, *s.* city, F 46.
Citole, *s.* stringed instrument of music, A 1959.
Citrinacioun, *s.* citronizing, the turning to the color of citron, a process in alchemy, G 816.
Clamb, *pt. s.* climbed, B 1987.
Clappe, *pr. pl.* chatter, prattle, G 965; Clappeth, *imp. pl.* make a constant clatter, keep chattering, E 1200; *pr. s.* talks fast, B 3971.
Clapping, *s.* chatter, idle talk, E 999.
Clarre, *s.* wine mixed with honey and spices, and afterwards strained till it was clear, A 1471.
Clause, *s.* sentence, B 251.
Clawe, *v.* rub, scratch, A 4326; D 940.
Cleernesse, *s.* clearness, brightness, glory, G 403.
Clene, *adj.* clean, pure, unmixed, B 1183.
Clene, *adv.* entirely, F 626.
Clepen, *v.* call, F 331; Clepeth, *pr. s.* calls, F 382; *men clepe*, people call, E 115.
Clere, *adj.* clear, bright, E 779.
Clergeon, *s.* a chorister-boy, B 1693.
Clergial, *adj.* clerklly, learned, G 752.
Clerk, *s.* clerk, learned man, student, E 1.
Clew, *pt. t.* of *Clawen*.
Cley, *s.* clay, G 807.
Cliket, *s.* latch-key, E 2046.
Clinken, *v.* to ring, sound, clink, tingle, B 1186; C 664.
Clinking, *s.* tinkling, B 3984.
Clippe, *v.* clip, cut, B 3257.
Clobbered, *adj.* clubbed, B 3088.
Cloisterer, *s.* a cloister-monk, B 3129.
Clokke, *s.* clock; *of the clock*, by the clock, B 14.
Clom, *interj.* hush, A 3638.
Clombe. See **Clymben**.
Cloos, *adj.* close, secret, G 1369.
Clos, *s.* a pen. enclosure, B 4550.
Clote-leef, *s.* a leaf of the burdock or clote-bur, G 577.
Clothred, *pp.* clotted, A 2745.
Clout, *s.* a cloth, C 736; Cloutes, *pl.* cloths, portions of a garment, rags, C 348.
Clowe-gilofre, *s.* clove, spice, B 1952.
Clymben, *v.* to climb, F 106; Clymbeth, *pr. s.* B 3966; *Clombe*, *pp.* B 12; *were clombe*, hadst climbed, B 3592.
Coagulat, *pp.* coagulated, clotted, G 811.
Cod, *s.* bag, C 534.
Cofre, *s.* coffer, money-box, G 836.
Coillons, *pl.* testicles, C 952.
Cokenay, *s.* milksop, A 4208.
Cokes, *s. pl.* cooks, C 538.
Cokewold, *s.* cuckold, A 3152.
Cokkel, *s.* cockle, *i.e.* the corn-cockle, B 1183.
Cokkes, corruption of *Goddess*, H 9; I 29.
Col-blak, *adj.* coal-black, A 2142.
Colde, *v.* grow cold, B 879.

Colerik, *adj.* choleric, F 51.
 Coles, *s. pl.* coals, G 1114.
 Col-fox, *s.* brant-fox, B 4405.
 Collacioun, *s.* conference, E 325.
 Collect, *s.* table of planetary motions, F 1275.
 Colour, *s.* color, outward appearance; Coloures, *pl.* colors, pretences (a pun), F 511.
 Colpons, *pl.* shreds, A 679.
 Columbyn, *adj.* dove-like, E 2141.
 Comandour, *s.* commander, B 495.
 Combust, *pp.* burnt up, G 811.
 Come, *s.* coming, G 343.
 Come, *v.* come; *come thereby*, come by it, acquire it, G 1395; *Comth, pr. s.* comes, B 407; *Comen, pp.* come, B 260; *ben comen*, are come, B 1130; *Coomen, pt. pl.* came, B 1805.
 Commune, *adj.* general, common, B 155; E 431.
 Commune, *s.* the commons, E 70.
 Commune, *v.* commune, converse, G 982.
 Companye, *s.* company, B 134.
 Compas, *s.* enclosure, continent; *tryne compas*, the threefold world, containing earth, sea, and heaven, G 45.
 Composiciouns, *s. pl.* suitable arrangements, F 229.
 Comprehende, *v.* take in (in the mind), F 223.
 Comunly, *adv.* commonly, E 726.
 Comyn, *s.* cummin, B 2045.
 Conclude, *v.* draw a conclusion, B 14; include, put together, G 429; attain to a successful result, G 773.
 Conclusioun, *s.* result, successful end of an experiment, G 672; reason, F 492.
 Confiture, *s.* composition, C 862.
 Confounde, *pp.* overwhelmed, B 100; destroyed in soul, G 137.
 Confus, *pp. as adj.* convicted of folly, G 463.
 Coniointinge, *s.* conjunction, G 95.
 Conne, *v.* con, learn, B 1730; *1 pr. pl.* we can, are able, B 483; *pr. s. subj.* he may know; *al conne he*, whether he may know, G 846.
 Conning, *adj.* skilful, B 3690.
 Conningly, *adv.* skilfully, E 1017.
 Conseil, *s.* council, B 204; counsel, B 425.
 Consistorie, *s.* judgment-seat, C 162.
 Conspiracye, *s.* plot, B 3889.
 Constable, *s.* governor, B 512.
 Constablesse, *s.* constable's wife, B 539.
 Constance, *s.* constancy, E 668, 1000, 1008.
 Constellacioun, *s.* constellation, cluster of stars, F 129.
 Constreyneth, *pr. s.* constrain, E 800.
 Contek, *s.* strife, A 2003.
 Contenance, *s.* pretence, appearance, G 1264; demeanor, F 924; self-possession, E 1110.
 Contrarie, *adj.* contrary, B 3964; *in contrarie*, in contradiction, G 1477.
 Contrarien, *v.* to go contrary to, oppose, F 705.

Contubernial, *s.* fellow-soldier, I 760.
 Conveyen, *v.* convey, introduce, E 55; *Conveyed, pt. pl.* accompanied, went as convoy, E 391.
 Coomen, *pt. pl.* came, B 1805. See *Come*.
 Coper, *s.* copper, G 829.
 Coppe, *s.* cup, A 134.
 Corage, *s.* courage, B 1970; will, E 907; feeling, disposition, E 220; *of his corage*, in his disposition, F 22.
 Cordewayne, *s.* Cordovan leather, B 1922.
 Corfew-tyme, *s.* curfew-time, about 8 P.M., A 3645.
 Corn, *s.* grain, C 863; *Cornes, pl.* cornfields, pieces of standing corn, B 3225.
 Corniculere, *s.* registrar, secretary, G 369.
 Corny, *adj.* applied to ale, strong of the corn or malt, C 315, 456.
 Corone, *s.* crown, garland, E 381.
 Corosif, *adj.* corrosive, G 853.
 Coroured, *pp.* crowned, B 3555.
 Corps, *s.* dead body, F 519.
 Corpus, *s.* body; *Corpus Dominus*, false Latin for *corpus Domini*, the body of the Lord, B 1625; *Corpus Madrian*, the body of St. Matthew, B 3082; *Corpus bones*, an intentionally nonsensical oath, composed of "corpus Domini," the Lord's body, and "bones," C 314.
 Correccioun, *s.* correction, I 60.
 Corruptable, *adj.* corruptible, A 3010.
 Corrupted, *pt. s.* corrupted, I 819.
 Cors, *s.* corpse, C 665.
 Corve. See *Kerve*.
 Cost, *s.* cost, B 3564.
 Costage, *s.* cost, expense, outlay, E 1126.
 Coste, *s.* the coast, B 1626.
 Cote, *s.* a cot, E 398.
 Cote, *s.* a coat, outer garment, used of a part of a woman's apparel, E 913.
 Cote-armour, *s.* coat with armorial bearings, B 2056.
 Couche, *v.* to cower, E 1206.
 Countour, *s.* auditor, A 359.
 Countre-taille, *s.* counter-tally, E 1190.
 Countrewayte, *v.* watch against, B 2509.
 Courtepy, *s.* cape, A 290.
 Couth, *pp.* known, E 942.
 Coveitye, *s.* covetousness, C 424.
 Coveynable, *adj.* suitable, I 80.
 Covent, *s.* conventual body, the monks composing the conventual body, B 1827; *convent*, G 1007.
 Coverchiefs, *s. pl.* kerchiefs, A 453.
 Covered, *pt. s.* covered, 914.
 Coward, *adj.* cowardly, B 3100.
 Coy, *adj.* or *adv.* quiet, E 2.
 Coyn, *s.* coin, E 1168.
 Crabbed, *adj.* shrewish, cross, bitter, E 1203.

Cracching, *s.* scratching, A 2834.
Cradel, *s.* cradle, G 122.
Craft, *s.* skill, way of doing a thing, F 185; secret power, might, B 3258; subtle contrivance, F 249.
Craftily, *adv.* cunningly, skilfully, B 48.
Crafty, *adj.* skilful, clever, G 1290.
Craketh, *pr. s.* sings hoarsely, E 1850.
Crased, *pp.* cracked, G 934.
Creatour, *s.* Creator, C 901.
Creance, *s.* creed, B 915; Creance, object of faith, B 340.
Creance, *v.* get credit, B 1479; creanced, *pp.* raised on credit, B 1556.
Crede, *s.* creed, belief, G 1037.
Crekes, *s. pl.* devices, A 4051.
Crepe, *v.* creep, B 3627; Crepeth, *pr. s.* E 1134.
Cristal, *adj.* crystal, C 347.
Cristemasse, *s.* Christmas, B 126, 1730.
Cristen, *adj.* Christian, B 222.
Cristendom, *s.* the Christian religion, B 351; Christianity, G 447.
Cristenly, *adv.* in a Christian manner, B 1122.
Cristianitee, *s.* company of Christians, B 544.
Cristned, *pp.* baptized, B 226; G 352.
Cristofre, *s.* image of St. Christopher worn as an amulet, A 115.
Crommes, *s. pl.* crumbs, G 60.
Crone, *s.* crone, hag, B 432.
Cropen, *pp.* crept, A 4259.
Croper, *s.* crupper, G 566.
Croslet, *s.* a crucible, G 1147; Crosselet, G 1117.
Crouche, *pr. s.* sign with the cross, A 3479.
Croude, *v.* crowd, push; Crowdest, *2 pr. s.* dost press, dost push, B 296.
Crouke, *s.* crock, A 4158.
Crowned, *pp.* crowned, *i.e.* supreme, F 526. See **Coroured**.
Crowding, *s.* pressure, motive power, B 299.
Croweth, *pr. s. refl.*; *him croweth*, crows, C 362.
Croys, *s.* cross, B 450; C 532; E 556.
Crul, *adj. pl.* curly, A 81.
Cucurbites, *s. pl.* flasks for distilling, G 794.
Culpe, *s.* guilt, I 336.
Cure, *s.* care, endeavor, B 188; *honest cure*, care for honorable things, C 557; *in cure*, in her care, in her power, B 230.
Cures, *s. pl.* cares, pursuits, E 82.
Cursedly, *adv.* wickedly, abominably, B 3419.
Cursednesse, *s.* malice, B 1821; wickedness, B 3575; shrewishness, E 1239.
Curteisly, *adv.* courteously, B 1636.
Curteisye, *s.* courtesy, refinement, B 3686; E 74; F 95.
Cut, *s.* a lot, C 793.

D.

Daf, *s.* fool, A 4208.
Dagginge, *s.* slitting, I 418.
Dagon, *s.* fragment, D 1751.
Daliance, **Daliaunce**, *s.* playful demeanor; *he doth daliaunce*, he behaves playfully and good-naturedly, B 1894.
Dame, *s.* mother, C 684.
Dampnable, *adj.* damnable, C 472.
Dampnacioun, *s.* damnation, C 500.
Dan. See **Daun**.
Dare, *v.* daze, D 1294.
Darreyne, *v.* contest, A 1609.
Darst, *2 pr. s.* darest, B 860; Dorste, *pt. s.* durst, B 753.
Daswen, *pt. pl.* daze, are dazed, are dazzled, H 31.
Date, *s.* a date, term, period, G 1411.
Daun, *s.* lord, sir, A 1379; Dan, B 3982.
Daunce, *v.* to dance, B 126; Dauncen, *pr. pl.* F 272.
Daungerous, *adj.* difficult to please, B 2129.
Dawe, *v.* to dawn, 3872.
Day, *s.* day; also, an appointed day for the payment of a sum of money, G 1040; day, time, B 3374; Dayes, *pl.* days, lifetime, B 118; *now a dayes*, now-a-days, at this time, E 1164.
Debaat, *s.* strife, G 1389.
Debat, *s.* debate, strife, war, B 130.
Debate, *v.* to fight, war, B 2058.
Declaring, *s.* declaration, B 3172.
Dede, *pp.* dead, A 942. See **Deed**.
Dede; *in dede*, indeed, in reality, B 3511.
Dedyt, *s.* delight, A 2177.
Deed, *pp. as adj.* dead, B 209; *pp.* dead, F 287.
Deedly, *adv.* deadly, mortally, G 476.
Deef, *adj.* deaf, A 446.
Deel. See **Del**.
Deer, *s. pl.* animals, B 1926.
Dees, *s. pl.* dice, F 690.
Deeth, *s.* death, B 3567; E 36, 510.
Deface, *v.* to obliterate, E 510.
Defame, *s.* dishonor, C 612. See **Diffame**.
Defaute, *s.* defect, E 1018; default, fault, wickedness, B 3718; fault, sin, C 370.
Defenden, *v.* to forbid, C 590.
Degyse, *adj.* fashionable, I 417.
Degree, *s.* rank, A 1168.
Degrees, *s. pl.* degrees of the zodiac, F 386.
Deknes, *s. pl.* deacons, G 547.
Del, *s.* part; *every del*, every whit, entirely, G 1269.
Deliver, *adj.* active, A 84.
Deliverly, *adv.* adroitly, B 4606.
Delivernesse, *s.* agility, I 452.
Delte, *pt. s.* dealt, G 1074.
Delve, *v.* to dig up, F 638.

Delyces, *s. pl.* delights, pleasures, C 547; G 3.
 Delytyng, *pr. pt.* delighting, E 997.
 Demandes, *s. pl.* questions, E 348.
 Demande, *s.* demand, question, B 472.
 Deme, *v.* suppose, B 1038; give a verdict, G 595; Demeth, *pr. s.* fancies, G 689; *imp. pl.* suppose ye, G 993; Demen, to give judgment, B 1639; *v.* judge, B 3045.
 Demeyne, *s.* dominion, B 3855.
 Depardieux, *interj.* on the part of God, by God's help, B 39.
 Departe, *v.* part, separate; Departed, *pt. s.* parted, B 1158; divided, C 812.
 Depe, *adv.* deeply, B 4.
 Depe, *adj.* deep, B 3988.
 Depe, *s.* the deep, the sea, B 455.
 Depper, *adv. comp.* deeper, B 630.
 Dere, *adj.* dear; *pl.* F 272.
 Dere, *adv.* dearly; to *dere*, too dearly, C 293.
 Dere, *v.* injure, wound, harm, F 240.
 Dereling, *s.* darling, A 3793.
 Derkest, *adj. superl.* darkest, B 304.
 Derne, *adj.* secret, A 3200.
 Derre, *adv. comp.* more dearly, A 1448.
 Descensories, *s. pl.* vessels for extracting oil, G 792.
 Desclaundred, *pp.* slandered, B 674.
 Desert, *s.* desert, deserving, merit, F 532.
 Desirous, *adj.* ardent, F 23.
 Deslavee, *adj.* unbridled, I 629.
 Desolaat, *adj.* deserted, alone; *holden desolaat*, shunned, C 598.
 Desolat, *adj.* desolate, *i.e.* void of, lacking in, B 131.
 Desordeyne, *adj.* inordinate, I 818.
 Desordinat, *adj.* disorderly, I 415.
 Despeired, *pp.* filled with despair, B 3645.
 Despence, *s.* expenses, expenditure, money for expenses, B 105. See **Dispence**.
 Spendest, 2 *pr. s.* spendest, wastest, B 2121.
 Despit, *s.* spite, B 591; vexation, dishonor, B 699.
 Despitously, *adv.* despitefully, maliciously, B 605.
 Desport, *s.* amusement, sport, G 592. See **Disport**.
 Despyse, *v.* to despise, B 115.
 Despyt, *s.* despise, a deed expressive of contempt, B 3738; *in your despyt*, in spite of you, in contempt of you, B 1753.
 Desray, *s.* disarray, confusion, I 927.
 Destourbe, *v.* to disturb; *destourbe of*, to disturb in, C 340.
 Destreyneth, vexes, constrains, A 1455.
 Deve, *adj. pl.* deaf, G 286.
 Devoir, *s.* duty, B 38; E 966.
 Devyse, *ger.* to relate, tell, B 154; to describe, F 65; to plan, E 698; to frame, E 739; Devy-

sen, *v.* imagine, E 108; Devyse, 1 *pr. s.* I tell, B 3693; *pr. pl.* imagine, discourse, F 261.
 Dextrer, *s.* a courser, war-horse, B 2103.
 Deye, *v.* die; Deyen, *v.* die, E 665; Deyde, *pt. s.* died, C 580; Deyeth, *pr. s.* dies, G 1436; Deyed, *pp.* B 1841.
 Deyinge, *s.* dying, death, B 1850.
 Deyneth, *impers. pr. s.*; *deyned him, pt. s.* it deigned him, *i.e.* he deigned, B 3324.
 Deyntee, *s.* pleasure, B 139; F 681; Deyntees, *pl.* dainties, F 301.
 Deyntee, *adj.* dainty, pleasant, rare, B 1901; C 520; E 1112; F 70.
 Deynteuous, *adj.* dainty, E 265.
 Deys, *s.* dais, F 59.
 Dide, *pt. s.* put on, B 2047; *dide hem drawe*, caused to be drawn, B 1823. See **Doon**.
 Diffame, *s.* evil name, ill report, E 540, 730. See **Defame**.
 Dighte, *v.* dight, prepare; *dighte me*, prepare myself to go, B 3104.
 Digne, *adj.* worthy, noble, B 1175; worthy, honored, C 695; suitable, B 778.
 Dignitee, *s.* dignity, rank, E 470.
 Dilatacioun, *s.* diffuseness, B 232.
 Discover, *v.* to reveal, G 1465.
 Discripcioun, *s.* description, F 580.
 Discryveth, *pt. s.* describes, E 43.
 Disdeyn, *s.* disdain, contempt, F 700.
 Disdeyne, *v.* to disdain, E 98.
 Disese, *s.* discomfort, source of pain, distress, B 3961; misery, F 467; lack of ease, trouble, distress, misery, B 616; G 747; H 97.
 Disparage, *s.* disparagement, disgrace, E 908.
 Dispence, *s.* expense, expenditure, E 1209. See **Despence**.
 Dispende, *v.* to spend, B 3500.
 Displeasances, *s. pl.* displeasures, annoyances, C 420.
 Dispoilen, *v.* to despoil, *i.e.* strip, E 374.
 Disport, *s.* pleasure, B 143. See **Desport**.
 Disposed, *pp.* inclined; *wel disposed*, in good health (the converse of *indisposed*), H 33.
 Dissever, *ger.* to part, G 875.
 Dissimuleth, *pr. s.* dissimulates, acts foolishly, G 466.
 Dissimuling, *s.* dissembling, G 1073.
 Diversely, *adv.* in different ways, F 202.
 Divyn, *adj.* divine, B 3247.
 Do. See **Doon**.
 Dogerel, *adj.* doggerel, B 2115.
 Dogges, *s. pl.* dogs, B 3089.
 Dokked, *pp.* cropped, A 590.
 Dolve. See **Delve**.
 Dome, *s.* judgment, C 637.
 Dominacioun, *s.* domination, supremacy, chiefest influence, F 352; dominion, C 560; power, H 57.

Dominus. See **Corpus.**
Don, Done. See **Doon.**
Doom, s. judgment, opinion, B 3127; F 677.
Doon, v. do, G 166; act, B 90; make, B 3507; cause, B 3618; *doon us honge*, cause us to be hung, C 790; *leet don cryen*, cause to be cried, F 46; **Doon,** *pp.* completed, G 387; *doon make*, caused to be made, E 253; *hath doon yow kept*, hath caused you to be kept, E 1098; **Do,** v. cause, B 3107; **Do,** *imp. s.* make, H 12; cause, G 32; *do hange*, cause me to be hung, G 1029; *do fecche*, cause to be fetched, B 662; *do wey*, put away, lay aside, G 487; **Do come,** *imp. s.* cause to come, B 2035; **Do kepe,** 2 *pr. pl.* cause to be kept, B 3624; **Done,** *ger. for to done*, a fit thing to do, I 62; **Doost,** 2 *pr. s.* makest, C 312; **Dooth,** *imp. pl.* do ye, C 745; **do,** E 568; *as dooth*, pray do, F 458; **Dooth, doth,** B 23; **Doth forth,** *pr. s.* continues, E 1015.
Dore, s. a door, E 282; F 615.
Dote, v. dote; **Doten,** grow foolish, act foolishly, G 983.
Doublenesse, s. duplicity, G 1300.
Doughter, s. daughter, B 151; E 608.
Doughty, *adj.* doughty, strong, F 338; warlike, F 11.
Doun, *adv.* down, F 323; *up and down*, in all directions, in all ways, B 53. See **Adoun.**
Doune, s. down, hill (*dat.*), B 1986.
Doute, s. doubt; *out of doute*, doubtless, B 390.
Douteless, *adv.* doubtless, without doubt, certainly, C 492; without hesitation, B 226.
Doutes, s. *pl.* fears, F 220.
Dowaire, s. dower, E 848.
Dowve, s. dove, pigeon, C 397.
Dradde, *pt. s.* dreaded, feared, B 3402; *dradde him*, was afraid, B 3918; **Drad,** *pp.* dreaded, E 69; **Dradden,** *pt. pl. subj.* should dread, should fear, G 15. See **Drede.**
Draf, s. draff, refuse, chaff, I 35.
Drasty, *adj.* filthy, worthless, trashy, B 2113.
Drawe, *pp.* drawn, moved; *drawe him*, withdraw himself, F 355; *drawen hem*, *pr. pl.* withdraw themselves, F 252; **Draweth,** *imp. pl.* invite, B 1632.
Drecched, *pp.* harassed, B 4077.
Drede, s. fear, G 204; doubt, C 507; *it is no drede*, there is no doubt, B 869; *out of drede*, out of doubt, certainly, E 634.
Drede, 1 *pr. s.* I dread, fear, E 636; **Dreed,** *imp. s.* dread, fear, E 1201; **Dreden,** v. to fear, G 320; *to drede*, *ger.* to be feared, G 437.
Dredful, *adj.* terrible, B 3558.
Drenche, v. drown; **Drenchen,** to be drowned, B 455.
Drenching, s. drowning, B 485.
Drery, *adj.* sad, E 514.

Dresse, v. address, prepare, E 1049; v. *refl.* address himself, G 1271; *dresseth hir*, *pt. s. refl.* prepares herself, B 265; **Dressen,** *pr. pl.* prepare themselves, set forward, B 263; **Dresse,** *pr. pl. refl.* direct themselves, *i. e.* take their places in order, B 416.
Dreye, *adj.* dry, B 3233.
Dreynt. See **Drenche.**
Drive, *pp.* driven, B 3203.
Drogges, s. *pl.* drugs, A 426.
Dronke, *pt. pl.* drank, B 3418; **Dronken,** B 3390.
Dronkelewe, *adj.* drunken, overcome with drink, C 495.
Dronkenesse, s. drunkenness, B 771; C 484.
Drope. s. drop, G 522.
Drough, *pt. s. refl.* drew himself, approached, B 1710.
Droughte, s. drought, F 118.
Drovy, *adj.* turbid, I 816.
Drugge, v. drudge, A 1416.
Dryve, v. drive; *dryve the day away*, pass the time, C 628.
Duk, s. duke, A 860.
Dul, *adj.* dull, F 279.
Dulleth, *pr. s.* makes dull, stupefies, G 1172.
Dun, s. the dun horse, H 5.
Dwale, s. sleeping-draught, A 4161.
Dyed, *pt. s.* dyed, steeped, F 511.
Dyen, v. die, B 114. See **Deye.**

E.

Ebbe, s. ebb, low water, F 259.
Eek, *adv.* eke, also, B 59, 70; moreover, also, B 140.
Eet, *pt. s.* ate, C 510; *imp. s.* eat, B 3640. See **Ete.**
Effect, s. deed, reality; *in effect*, in fact, in reality, G 511.
Eft, *adv.* again, G 1263.
Eftsonne, *adv.* soon after, G 1288; soon after this, H 65; hereafter, G 933; again, B 909.
Eggement, s. instigation, incitement, B 842.
Egre, *adj.* eager, sharp, fierce, E 1199.
Egreimoine, s. agrimony, G 800.
Eighte, *num.* eight, C 771.
Eightetethe, *ord. adj.* eighteenth, B 5.
Eir, s. air, A 1246.
Ekko, s. echo, E 1189.
Elaat, *adj.* elate, B 3357.
Elder, *adj. comp.* older, B 1720, 3450.
Eldres, s. *pl.* elders, forefathers, B 3388.
Elenge, *adj.* wretched, B 1412.
Elf-queen, s. fairy queen, B 1978.
Ellebor, s. hellebore, B 4154.
Elles, *adv.* else, otherwise; *elles god forbede*, God forbid it should be otherwise, G 1046.
Elleswher, *adv.* elsewhere, G 1130.

Elvish, *adj.* lit. elvish, imp-like, mysterious; but used in the sense of foolish, G 751; elf-like, abstracted, G 842.

Embassadrye, *s.* embassy, negotiation, B 233.

Emeraude, *s.* emerald, B 1799.

Empireden, *pt. pl.* made worse, B 2205.

Empeyre, *pr. s.* impair, E 2198.

Emplastre, *pr. pl.* plaster over, "whitewash," E 2297.

Empoisoned, *pp.* poisoned, B 3850.

Empoisoning, *s.* poisoning, C 891.

Empoysoner, *s.* poisoner, C 894.

Emprinteth, *imp. pl.* imprint, impress, E 1193.

Empryse, *s.* enterprise, undertaking, G 605.

Empte, *v.* empty, make empty, G 741; Empten, G 1404.

Enbibing, *s.* imbibition, absorption, G 814.

Encens, *s.* incense, A 2938.

Encense, *v.* to offer incense, G 395, 413.

Encheson, *s.* occasion, cause, F 456; Enchesoun, B 2783.

Encorporing, *s.* incorporation, G 815.

Encrees, *s.* increase, B 237; G 18.

Encrese, *v.* increase; Enresse, B 1068; Encresen, B 1654; Encresseth, *pr. s.* E 50; Encressed, *pp.* E 408.

Ende, *s.* end, result, B 481.

Endelees, *adj.* endless, B 951.

Endelong, *prep.* down along, F 416.

Endenting, *s.* scalloping, I 417.

Endetted, *pp.* indebted, G 734.

Endure, *v.* last, B 3538.

Endyte, *v.* indict, B 3858; Endyted, *pp.* composed, B 3170; Endyten, *v.* indite, write, B 781.

Informed, *pp.* informed, E 738; F 335.

Engendred, *pp.* engendered, begotten, E 158.

Engreggen, *pr. pl.* weigh upon, I 979.

Engyn, *s.* gin, machine, F 184; genius, skill, G 339.

Enlumined, *pt. s.* illumined, E 33.

Enluting, *s.* securing with "lute," daubing with clay, etc., to exclude air, G 766.

Enquere, *v.* inquire, search into, B 629.

Enqueringe, *s.* inquiry, B 888.

Entencioun, *s.* intention, intent, C 408.

Entende, *ger.* to direct one's attention, apply one's self, B 3498; to attend, dispose one's self, F 689.

Entente, *s.* will, B 824; design, B 3835; plan, B 147, 206; endeavor, G 7; wish, E 189; mind, B 1740; *in good entent*, with good will, B 1902; *as to commune entente*, with reference to its common (*i. e.* plain) meaning, *i. e.* in plain, intelligible language, F 107.

Entraille, *s.* entrails, inside, E 1188.

Entredited, *pp.* under an interdict, I 905.

Entringe, *pr. pt.* entering, I 12.

Envenimed, *pp.* envenomed, poisoned, B 3314.

Envoluped, *pp.* wrapped up, enveloped, involved, C 942.

Envye, *s.* envy, jealousy, B 3584.

Envyned, *pp.* supplied with wine, A 342.

Equitee, *s.* equity, justice, E 439.

Er, *adv.* before, B 420; G 1273.

Er, *conj.* ere, B 119; F 130; *er now*, ere now, F 460; *er that*, before, E 178.

Er, *prep.* before, C 892; *er that*, before that, G 375.

Erchedeken, *s.* archdeacon, D 1300.

Ere, *s.* ear, F 196, 316.

Erl, *s.* earl, B 3597, 3646.

Erme, *v.* feel sad, grieve, C 312.

Ernestful, *adj.* serious, E 1175.

Ers, *s.* buttocks, A 3734.

Erst, *adv.* first, at first; *at erst*, for the first time, B 1884; G 151; *long erst er*, long first before, C 662. See **Er**.

Eschue, *v.* to eschew, avoid, shun, G 4.

Ese, *s.* ease, E 217; pleasure, G 746; ease, relief, H 25.

Espye, *v.* inquire about, B 180.

Essoyne, *s.* excuse for absence, I 164.

Est, *s.* east, B 297, 493, 3657

Estaat, *s.* rank, B 973; estate, condition, rank, B 3592; way, E 610.

Estatlich, *adj.* stately, A 140.

Ete, *v.* eat, F 617.

Evangyles, *s. pl.* gospels, B 666.

Eve, *s.* eve, evening, F 364; G 375.

Evel, *adv.* ill, B 1897.

Evene, *adj.* even, E 811.

Everich, every one, E 1017; either of the two, B 1004.

Everichon, every one, B 330.

Exaltacioun, *s.* exaltation (a term in astrology), I 10.

Exametron, *s.* a hexameter, B 3169.

Expans, *adj.* separate, F 1275.

Expert, *adj.* experienced, B 4; skilful in performing an experiment, experienced, G 1251.

Expoune, *v.* to expound, explain, B 3398; G 86; Expounded, *pt. s.* B 3399.

Extenden, *pr. pl.* are extended, B 461.

Ey, *interj.* eh! what! C 782.

Ey, *s.* egg, G 806.

Eyleth, *pr. s.* ails, B 1171; aileth, H 16; Eyled, *pt. s. impers.* ailed, F 501.

Eyre, *s.* air, gas, G 767.

F.

Face, *s.* face; a technical term in astrology, signifying the third part of a sign (of the zodiac); a part of the zodiac ten degrees in extent, F 50.

Fader, *s.* father; *fader day*, father's day, fath-

- er's time, B 3374; *Fadres*, fathers, ancestors, E 61; parents, originators, B 129; *fader kin*, father's race, ancestry, G 829.
- Fairnes, Fairnesse**, *s.* fairness, beauty, E 384.
- Fairyre**, *s.* fairyland, F 96; fairy contrivance, magic, F 201.
- Falding**, *s.* coarse cloth, A 391.
- Falle**, *v.* happen, light, E 126; suit, E 259; *pp.* happened, E 938; *Fallen*, *v.* happen, F 134; accidentally placed, F 684; *Fil*, *pt. s.* fell, C 804; *Fel*, befell, B 141. See *Fil*.
- Fals**, *adj.* false, B 74.
- False**, *v.* deceive, be untrue to; *Falsed*, *pp.* falsified, broken (faith), F 627.
- False get**, cheating contrivance, G 1277.
- Falshede**, *s.* falsehood, G 979.
- Faltren**, *pr. pl.* falter, fail, B 772.
- Falwes**, *s. pl.* fallows, D 656.
- Fame**, *s.* good report, E 418.
- Fan**, *s.* vane, quintain, H 42.
- Fantastyk**, *adj.* imaginative, A 1376.
- Fare**, *s.* business, goings on, B 569.
- Fare**, 1 *pr. s.* go, G 733; am, B 1676; *pp.* gone, B 512; *Fareth*, *pr. s.* it turns out, G 966; it fares, it is, E 1217; *Faren*, 1 *pr. pl.* we fare, live, G 662; *Far well*, *imp. s.* farewell, B 116.
- Farewel**, *interj.* farewell! it is all over, G 907.
- Faste**, *adv.* quickly, G 245; *as faste*, very quickly, G 1235; *faste by*, close at hand, B 3116.
- Faster**, *adv.* closer, B 3722.
- Faucon**, *s.* falcon, F 411. 424.
- Fauconers**, *s. pl.* falconers, F 1196.
- Faught**, *pt. s.* fought, B 3519.
- Fayn**, *adv.* gladly, willingly, B 41; *wolde fayn*, would fain, would be glad to, E 696.
- Fayn**, *adj.* glad, H 92.
- Feeble**, *adj.* feeble, weak, E 1198.
- Fecche**, *v.* to fetch, B 1857; *Fecchen*, E 276. See *Fet*.
- Feeld**, *s.* field, in an heraldic sense, B 3573; *Feld*, *dat.* field, plain, B 3197.
- Feend**, *s.* the fiend, F 522.
- Feet**, *s.* performance, E 429.
- Feffed in**, *pp.* invested with, E 1698.
- Fel**, *pt. s.* befell, happened, B 141. See *Falle*.
- Fel**, *adj.* fell, cruel, terrible, B 2019.
- Feld**. See *Feeld*.
- Fele**, *adj.* many, E 917.
- Felle**. See *Fel*.
- Felonye**, *s.* crime, B 643.
- Femenye**, *s.* womankind, A 866.
- Femininitee**, *s.* feminine form, B 360.
- Pen**, *s.* chapter, or subdivision of Avicenna's book, called the Canon, C 890.
- Fend**. See *Feend*.
- Fer**, *adj.* far, B 508, 658.
- Ferde**, *pt. s.* fared, *i.e.* behaved, E 1060. See *Fare*.
- Fere**, *s. dat.* fear, B 3369.
- Fered**, *pp.* terrified, afraid, G 924.
- Ferforth**, *adv.* far, *as ferforth as*, as far as, B 1099; *so ferforth*, to such a degree, G 40. See *Fer*.
- Ferly**, *adj.* wonderful, A 4173.
- Fermacies**, *s. pl.* pharmacies, medicines, A 2713.
- Ferme**, *adj.* firm, E 663.
- Fermerere**, *s.* keeper of the infirmary, D 1859.
- Fern**, *adv.* long ago; *so fern*, so long ago, F 256.
- Fern-asshen**, *s. pl.* fern-ashes, ashes produced by burning ferns, F 254.
- Ferre**. See *Fer*.
- Ferreste**, *adj. super.* farthest, A 494.
- Ferthe**, fourth, B 823; G 531.
- Ferther**, *adj.* further, B 1686.
- Ferthing**, *s.* morsel, A 134.
- Fest**, *s.* first, C 802.
- Feste**, *s.* feast, festival; *to feste*, to the feast, at a feast, B 1007; *han to feste*, to invite, B 380.
- Festeyinge**, *pr. pt.* feasting, entertaining, F 345.
- Festlich**, *adj.* festive, fond of feasts, F 281.
- Festne**, *v.* fasten, A 195.
- Fet**, *pp.* fetched, B 667.
- Fete**, *s. pl. dat.* feet; *to fete*, at his feet, B 1104.
- Petis**, *adj.* well-made, neat, graceful, C 478.
- Fetisly**, *adv.* neatly, skilfully, A 273.
- Fetted**, *pt. s.* fettered, B 3547.
- Fey**, *s.* faith, C 762.
- Feyne**, *v.* feign, speak falsely; *Feyned*, *pp.* pretended, F 524; *seyne us*, pretend as regards ourselves, B 351.
- Feyning**, *s.* pretending, cajolery, F 556.
- Feynting**, *s.* fainting, failing, E 970.
- Figures**, *s. pl.* figures of speech, E 16.
- Figuringe**, *s.* similitude, figure, G 96.
- Fil**, *pt. s.* fell, occurred, happened, B 1865; *as fer as reason fil*, as far as reason extended, F 570; *Fillen*, fell, B 3183. See *Falle*.
- Fingres**, *s. pl.* fingers, E 380.
- Firste**, *adj. used as a s.*; *my firste*, my first narration, F 75.
- Fish**, *s.* the sign Pisces, F 273.
- Fit**, *s.* a "fyt" or "passus," a portion of a song, B 2078.
- Fithele**, *s.* fiddle, A 296.
- Fix, Fixe**, *pp.* fixed, solidified, G 779.
- Flambes**, *s. pl.* flames, B 3353; G 515.
- Flayn**, *pp.* flayed, I 425.
- Flee**, *v.* fly, F 503.
- Fleen**, *s. pl.* fleas, H 17.
- Fleet**, *pr. s.* floats, B 463.
- Fleigh**, *pt. s.* fled, B 3879.
- Flekked**, *pp.* spotted, G 565.
- Flemer**, *s.* banisher, driver away, B 460.
- Flemeth**, *pr. s.* chases away, H 182; *Flemed*, *pp.* banished, G 58.

- Flex**, *s.* flax, A 676.
Flo, *s.* dart, H 264.
Flokmele, *adv.* in a flock, in a great number, E 86.
Flood, *s.* flood, flowing of the sea, F 259.
Flotery, *adj.* dishevelled, A 2883.
Flour, *s.* choice, pattern, E 919.
Floure, *pr. s. subj.* flower, flourish, E 120.
Floytinge, *pres. pt.* fluting, A 91.
Fneseth, *pr. s.* breathes heavily, puffs, snorts, H 62.
Foison, *s.* abundance, B 504.
Folwen, *pr. pl.* follow, C 514; *Folweth*, *imp. pl.* follow, imitate, E 1189.
Foly, **Folye**, *s.* folly, E 236.
Fome. See **Foom**.
Fonde, *v.* try to persuade, B 347; attempt, try, E 283. See **Founde**.
Fonge, *v.* to receive, B 377.
Fonne, *s.* fool, A 4089.
Font-full water, fontful of water, B 357.
Fontstoon, *s.* font, B 723.
Fool, *s.* a fool, employed to make sport, B 3271.
Foom, *s.* foam, G 564; **Fome**, *dat.* G 565.
Foo-men, *s. pl.* foes, B 3255, 3507.
Foot-hot, *adv.* instantly, on the spot, B 438.
For, *conj.* in order that, B 478; F 102.
For, *prep.*; *for me*, by my means, F 357.
Forage, *s.* forage, food, B 1973.
Forbad, *pt. s.* forbade, E 570; **Forbedeth**, *pr. s.* forbids, C 643.
Force. See **Fors**.
Fordoon, *v.* to do for, to destroy, B 369.
For-dronke, *pp.* very drunk, C 674.
Fordrye, *adj.* very dry, exceedingly dry, withered up, F 409.
Fore, *s.* course, D 1935.
For-fered, *pp.* exceedingly afraid; *forfered of*, very afraid for, F 527.
Forgoon, *v.* forgo, G 610.
Forlete, *v.* to leave, yield up, B 1848; to give up, C 864.
Forme-fader, first father, B 2293.
Forncast, *pp.* planned, I 448.
Forneys, *s.* furnace, A 559.
Fors, *s.*; *make no fors*, take no heed, H 68.
Forsake, *v.* to forsake, leave, B 3431.
Forsleuthen, *v.* over tarry, B 4286.
For-sleweth, *pr. s.* is over-slothful, I 685.
For-sluggeth, *pr. s.* is over-sluggish, I 685.
Forster, *s.* forester, A 117.
For-straight, *pp.* exhausted, B 1295.
Forth, *adv.* forth, F 605; *used as v.* go forth, F 604.
Forthermo, *adv.* moreover, C 594.
Forther over, *adv.* furthermore, moreover, C 648.
Forth-right, *adv.* straight, directly, F 1503.
Forthward, *adv.* forward, B 263.
For-thy, *adv.* therefore, A 1841.
Fortunen, *v.* presage, A 417.
For-waked, *pp.* weary through watching, B 596.
Forward, *s.* promise, B 40.
Forwiting, *s.* foreknowledge, B 4433.
Forwrapped, *pp.* wrapped up, C 718.
Foryetful, *adj.* forgetful, E 472.
Fostred, *pp.* nurtured, brought (up), G 122; nurtured in the faith, G 539; nurtured, kept, E 1043.
Fote, *s.* a foot; *on fote*, on foot, F 390.
Fother, *s.* cartload, A 530.
Foul, *adj.* foul, bad; *for foul ne fair*, by foul means or fair, B 525; *foule*, *adj.* poor, wretched, B 4003.
Founden, *pp.* provided, B 243.
Foundred, *pt. s.* fell, A 2687.
Foure, four, B 491.
Fourneys, *s.* furnace, B 3353.
Foynen, *pres. pl.* thrust, A 1654.
Foyson, *s.* abundance, A 3165.
Fraknes, *s. pl.* freckles, A 2169.
Frankleyn, *s.* franklin, F 675.
Fraught, *pp.* freighted, B 171.
Fraunchyse, *s.* liberality, B 3854.
Frayneth, *pr. s.* prays, beseeches, B 1790.
Freendes, *s. pl.* friends, B 269.
Freletee, *s.* frailty, E 1160.
Fremde, foreign, F 429.
Frete, *pp.* eaten, devoured, B 475; **Freten**, *pp.* devoured, A 2068.
Freynd, *pp.* asked, questioned, G 433.
Froteth, *pr. s.* rubs, A 3747.
Fructuous, *adj.* fruitful, I 73.
Fruyt, *s.* result (lit. fruit), B 411.
Fruytsteres, *s. pl. fem.* fruit-sellers, C 478.
Ful, *adj.* full, B 86.
Ful, *adv.* very, B 3506; *ful many*, very many, F 128.
Fulfld, *pp.* fulfilled, E 596; completed, fully performed, I 17.
Fulliche, *adv.* fully, E 706.
Fulsomnesse, *s.* satiety, profuseness, F 405.
Fumetere, *s.* the herb fumitory, B 4153.
Fumositee, *s.* fumes arising from drunkenness, C 567; F 358.
Furial, *adj.* tormenting, F 448.
Fusible, *adj.* fusible, capable of being fused, G 856.
Fyf, five, B 3602.
Fyn, *s.* end, purpose, result, B 3348, 3884.
Fyne, *adj. pl.* fine, good, F 640.
Fyr, *s.* fire, B 3734.

G.

Gadrede, *pt. s.* gathered, A 824.

Gaillard, Gaylard, *adj.* gay, merry, A 4367, 3336.
Gale, *v.* cry out, D 832.
Galianes, *s. pl.* medicines, C 306.
Galingale, *s.* sweet cypress root, A 381.
Galle, *s.* gall, B 3537; G 58, 797.
Galoche, *s.* a shoe, F 555.
Galoun, *s.* gallon, H 24.
Galping, *pres. pl.* gaping, F 350.
Galwes, *s. pl.* gallows, B 3924, 3941.
Game, *s.* joke, E 733.
Ganeth, *pr. s.* yawneath, H 35.
Gargat, *s.* throat, B 4525.
Garnisoun, *s.* garrison, B 2217.
Gas, goes, A 4037.
Gat-tothed, *adj.* goat-toothed, lascivious, A 468.
Gaude, *s.* trick, course of trickery, C 389.
Gauren, *ger.* to gaze, stare, B 912; Gaureth, *pr. s.* gazes, stares, B 3559.
Gayler, *s.* jailer, B 3615.
Gayneth, *pr. s.* availeth, A 1787.
Gaytres beryies, berries of the dogwood tree, B 4155.
Geaunt, *s.* giant, B 1997.
Gent, *adj.* refined, exquisite, noble, B 1905. Short for *gentil*.
Gentil, *adj.* gentle, worthy, B 1627; excellent, B 3123; compassionate, F 483; Gentils, *pl.* people of gentle birth, "the noble folk," C 323; E 480.
Gentillesse, *s.* kindness, G 1054; condescension, B 853; nobleness, B 3441; F 483, 505; nobility, B 3854; worth, E 96; slenderness, symmetry, F 426; delicate nurture, E 593.
Gentilleste, *adv.* noblest, E 72.
Gentilly, *adv.* courteously, B 1093; in a frank or noble manner, frankly, F 674.
Geomancie, *s.* divination by figures made on the earth, I 605.
Ge, *s.* gear, property, B 800; gear, clothing, E 372.
Gerland, *s.* garland, G 27.
Gery, *adj.* changeable, A 1536.
Gesse, *1 pr. s.* suppose, B 246.
Geste, *s.* a stock story; *in geste*, like the common stock stories, B 2123; Gestes, *pl.* stories, B 1126; F 211.
Gestours (*g as j*), *pl.* story-tellers, B 2036.
Get, *s.* contrivance, G 1277.
Geten, *pp. han geten hem,* to have acquired for themselves, F 56.
Gif, *conj.* if, A 4181.
Gigginge, *pres. pt.* strapping, A 2504.
Giltlees, *adj.* guiltless, B 643; Gilteels, B 1062.
GIN, *s.* snare, contrivance, G 1165.
Gingebreed, *s.* gingerbread, B 2044.
Gipoun, *s.* short vest, A 75.

Girdel, *s.* a girdle, B 1921.
Girden, *v.* to strike, B 3736.
Giternes, *s. pl.* guitars, C 466.
Glade, *v.* to make glad, comfort, cheer, B 4001.
Gladly, *adv.* willingly, F 224; *that been gladly wyse*, that wish to be thought wise, F 376.
Gladsom, *adj.* pleasant, B 3968.
Glas, *s.* glass, F 254.
Glede, *s.* a burning coal, B 111, 3574.
Glee, *s.* entertainment, B 2030.
Gleyre, *s.* white (of an egg), G 806.
Glood, *pt. s.* glided, went quickly, B 2094.
Glose, *s.* glosing. comment, F 166.
Glose, *v.* to flatter, B 3330; I 45; Glosen, to comment upon, B 1180.
Glyde, *v.* glide; *up glyde*, to rise up gradually, F 373; to glide, ascend, G 402. See **Glood**.
Gnow, *pt. s.* gnawed, B 3638.
Goddes, *gen. sing.* God's, B 1166.
Golet, *s.* throat, gullet, C 543.
Gon, *v.* go, proceed, F 200; Gooth, *pr. s.* goes, B 385; Goost, *2 pr. s.* goest, walkest about, B 3123; Goon, *pr. pl.* go, proceed, E 898; Goon, *pp.* gone, B 17; *goon is many a yere*, many a year ago, B 132; Go, *2 pr. pl.* ye walk, go on foot, C 748. See **Goon**.
Gonne, *pt. pl.* did; *gonne arace*, did tear away, removed, E 1103. See **Gan**.
Good, *s.* goods, property, wealth, G 831.
Goodlich, *adj.* kind, bountiful, G 1053.
Goodly, *adj.* good, proper, pleasing, right, B 3969; good-looking, portly, B 4010.
Good-man, *s.* master of the house, C 361.
Goon, *v. go;* *lete it goon*, let it go, neglect it, G 1475. See **Gon**.
Goost. See Gon.
Goost, *s.* a ghost, B 3124; the Holy Ghost, B 1660; *yaf up the goost*, died, B 1862. See **Gost**.
Goot, *s.* a goat, G 886.
Gossomer, *s.* gossamer, F 259.
Gost, *s.* ghost (ironically), H 55; the Holy Ghost, G 328. See **Goost**.
Gost. See Goon.
Gostly, *adv.* spiritually, mystically, G 109.
Goth, *imp. pl.* go, B 3384. See **Gon**.
Governaille, *s.* management, mastery, E 1192.
Governance, *s.* government, B 287; providence, E 1161; arrangement, plan, E 994; Governance, rule, government, C 600; sovereignty, B 3541; *his governaunce*, the way to manage him, F 311.
Governe, *v.* govern, control, B 3587; Governeth, *imp. pl.* arrange, E 322.
Governour, *s.* governor, master, principal, B 3130.
Grace, *s.* favor, kindness, F 458; favor, G 1348; *hir grace*, her favor (*i.e.* that of the blessed

Virgin), B 980; pardon, B 647; *of grace*, out of favor, in kindness, F 161.
Gracelees, *adj.* void of grace, unfavored by God, G 1078.
Grant mercy, much thanks, G 1380.
Gras, *s.* grace, B 2021. See **Grace**.
Gras, *s.* grass, F 153.
Graunten, *v.* grant, fix, name, E 179; **Graunted**, *pt. s.* E 183.
Grave, *v.* bury, E 681.
Grayn, *s.* dye; *in grayn*, in dye, *i.e.* dyed of a fast color, B 1917. See **Greyn**.
Gree, *s.* gratitude, good part, E 1151.
Grene, *adj.* as *s.* greenery, greenness, F 54; greenness, living evidence, G 90.
Grenehede, *s.* greenness, wantonness, B 163.
Gret, *adj.* great, F 463.
Gretter, *adj. comp.* greater, E 1126.
Grevance, *s.* grievance, hardship, B 3703.
Greve, *v.* to grieve, vex, B 1638; **Greveth**, *pr. s.* *impers.* it vexes, it grieves, E 647.
Greyn, *s.* a grain, B 1852; *in greyn*, in grain, *i.e.* of a fast color, F 511.
Grisly, *adj.* terrible, awful, B 3299; grewsome, C 473.
Gronte, *pt. s.* groaned, B 3899.
Grotes, *s. pl.* groats, fourpenny pieces, C 376.
Grucche, *v.* to murmur, E 170; *grucche it*, to murmur at it, E 354.
Gruft, *adv.* grovellingly, all along, flat down, B 1865.
Grys, *s.* gray, G 559.
Gyde, *s.* ruler, G 45.
Gyde, *imp. s.* may (He) guide, B 245.
Gye, *v.* guide, rule, B 3587; *ger.* to guide, regulate, I 13.
Gyse, *s.* guise, wise, way, manner, F 332; *in his gyse*, as he was wont, B 790.

H.

Haberdassher, *s.* seller of hats, A 361.
Habergeoun, *s.* a habergeon, hauberk, A 2119.
Habounde, *v.* to abound, B 3938.
Habundant, *adj.* abundant, E 59.
Haf, *pt. s.* heaved, A 3470.
Hainselins, *s. pl.* smocks, I 422.
Hakeney, *s.* hack-horse, hackney, G 559.
Halp, *pt. s.* helped, B 3236.
Halse, *1 pr. s.* I conjure, B 1835.
Halt, *pr. s.* holdeth, holds, B 807; F 61.
Halwed, *pt. s.* consecrated, hallowed, G 551.
Halwes, lit. holy ones, B 1060; *gen. pl.* of (all) saints, G 1244.
Halydayes, *pl.* holy days, festivals, A 3952; I 667.
Han, *v.* keep, retain, C 725; take away, C 727; obtain, G 234.

Hande-brede, *s.* hand-breadth, A 3811.
Hap, *s.* luck, B 3928; G 1209.
Happeth, *pr. s.* chances, F 592; **Happede**, *pt. s.* happened, C 606.
Harde, *adj. def.* hard, cruel, F 499.
Hardily, *adv.* boldly, without doubting, without question, E 25.
Hardinesse, *s.* boldness, B 3210.
Harding, *s.* hardening, tempering, F 243.
Hardy, *adj.* bold, sturdy, F 19.
Haried, *pp.* taken as a prisoner, A 2726.
Harlot, *s.* rascal, A 647; D 1754.
Harlotryes, *s. pl.* ribaldries, A 561.
Harme, *s.* harm, injury, suffering (*dat.*), F 632.
Harneised, *pp.* equipped, A 114.
Harneys, *s.* armor, gear, furniture, harness, A 1006, 2896.
Harre, *s.* hinge, A 550.
Harrow, *interj.* alas! C 288.
Harwed, *pp.* harrowed, devastated, A 3512; D 2107.
Hasard, *s.* the game of hazard, C 591.
Hasardour, *s.* gamester, G 596.
Hasardrye, *s.* gaming, playing at hazard, C 590.
Hasteth, *imp. pl. v. s. fl.* hasten, make haste, I 72.
Hastif, *adj.* hasty, E 349.
Hastilich, *adv.* quickly, E 911.
Hauberk, *s.* coat of mail, B 2053. See **Habergeoun**.
Hauking, *s.* hawking; *an hauking*, a-hawking, B 1927.
Haunt, *s.* practice, A 447; abode, B 2001.
Haunteth, *pr. s.* practises, C 547; **Haunteden**, *pt. pl.* practised, C 464; **Haunten**, *pr. pl.* I 780.
Hauteyn, *adj.* loud, C 330.
Have, *v.* have, B 114; *imp. s.* hold, consider, F 7; receive, E 567; **Haveth**, *imp. pl.* hold, F 700.
Hawe, *s.* haw, yard, enclosure, C 855.
Hawe, *s.* haw; *with harve bake*, with baked haws, with coarse fare, B 95.
He, *used for it*, G 867, 868.
Hede, *s.* heed, care, B 3577.
Hedes, *s. pl.* heads, F 203; **Hevedes**, B 2032; *maugree thyn heed*, in spite of thy head, in spite of all thou canst do, B 104.
Heeld, *1 pt. s.* held, considered, E 818; *pt. s.* held, esteemed, C 625; possessed, B 3518; **Helde**, *pl.* held, B 3506.
Heep, *s.* heap, assembly, host, A 575.
Heer, *adv.* here, B 1177.
Heigh, *adj.* high, lofty, B 3192.
Hele, *v.* to heal, F 240.
Helle, *dat.* hell, B 3292.
Helmed, *pp.* provided with a helmet, B 3560.
Henne, *adv.* hence, C 687.
Hente, *pt. s.* seized, took forcibly, E 534; took

- in hunting, B 3449; caught away, B 1144; raised, lifted, G 205; *pr. s. subj.* may seize, G 7.
- Hepe**, *s. hip*, B 1937.
- Her**, *pron. poss.* their, B 138, 140.
- Heraud**, *s. herald*, A 2533.
- Herbergage**, *s. lodging, abode*, B 147.
- Herbergeours**, *s. pl. harbingers, providers of lodging*, B 997.
- Herberwe**, *lodging, inn, harbor*, A 403, 765.
- Her-biforn**, *adv. herebefore*, B 613.
- Herd**, *pp. haired*, A 2518.
- Here**, *pron. her*, B 460.
- Here**, *v. hear*; **Herd**, *pp. heard*, B 613.
- Here**. See **Heer**.
- Herieth**, *pr. s. praiseth*, B 1115; *praises*, B 1808; *Heriest*, 2 *pr. s. praiseth, worshippeth*, B 3419; *Herie*, *pr. pl. E* 616; *Herien*, G 47; *Hered*, *pp. B* 872.
- Herkne**, *ger. to hearken, listen to*, B 3159; *Herkneth*, *imp. pl. hearken ye*, C 454; *Herkeneth*, *imp. pl. to hearken, listen to*, B 1164; *Herkned*, *pt. s. B* 1711; *Herkning*, *pres. part. listening to*, F 78; *Herkned after*, *pp. listened for, expected*, F 403.
- Hernes**, *s. pl. corners*, G 658.
- Heronsewes**, *s. pl. hernshaws, young herons*, F 68.
- Herte-blood**, *heart's blood*, C 902.
- Hertelees**, *without heart, cowardly*, B 4098.
- Hertes**, *s. gen. hart's*, B 3447.
- Herte-spoon**, *s. "the concave part of the breast, where the ribs unite with the cartilago ensiformis," A* 2606.
- Hertly**, *adj. hearty, lit. heart-like*, E 502; F 5.
- Her-to**, *adv. for this purpose*, B 243.
- Heryinge**, *p. pres. praising*, B 1649.
- Heste**, *s. behest, command*, B 382, 3754.
- Hete**, *s. heat*, G 1408.
- Hethen**, *adj. heathen*, B 904.
- Hethenesse**, *s. heathen lands*, B 1112.
- Hething**, *s. mockery*, A 4110.
- Heven**, *s. heaven, the celestial sphere*, B 3300; *a supreme delight*, F 558.
- Hewe**, *s. pretence*, C 421; *hue, appearance, mien*, E 377.
- Hewe**, *s. domestic servant*, E 1785.
- Hey**, *s. hay*, H 14.
- Heyne**, *s. a worthless person*, G 1319.
- Heyre**, *adj. hair, made of hair*, C 736.
- Hiderward**, *adv. hither, in this direction*, B 3159.
- Highte**, 2 *pt. pl. promised*, E 496.
- Highte**, *s. height*, B 12.
- Hindrete**, *hindmost*, A 622.
- Hipes**, *pl. hips*, A 472.
- Hir**, *pron. poss. their*, B 112; *her*, B 65, 164.
- Hir**, *pron. pers. her*, B 162.
- His**, *its*, E 263; F 405.
- Hit**, *pr. s. hides*, F 512.
- Ho**, *interj. halt!* B 3957.
- Hoker**, *s. mockery*, A 3965.
- Hokerly**, *adv. scornfully*, I 584.
- Hold**, *s. fort, castle*, B 507; *hold, grasp*, F 167.
- Holde**, *v. keep to*; *hold, keep*, B 41; *to keep to*, F 658 (see **Proces**); *considered to be*, F 70; *Holden*, *pp. considered*, E 205; *Holde*, 1 *pr. s. I consider, deem*, G 739.
- Hole**, *adj. pl. whole, hale; hole and sounde, safe and sound*, B 1150.
- Holour**, *s. lecher*, B 254.
- Holpen**, *pp. helped, aided*, F 666. *Pp. of Helpen*.
- Holt**, *s. wood, grove*, A 6.
- Holwe**, *adj. hollow*, G 1265.
- Hom**, *adv. home, homewards*, F 635.
- Homicyde**, *s. homicide, assassin*, B 1757; *manslaughter, murder*, C 644.
- Hond**, *s. hand*, B 3506; *on honde*, *in hand*, B 343.
- Honest**, *adj. honorable, worthy*, B 1751; *honorable, seemly, decent*, C 328.
- Honestee**, *s. honor, dignity*, B 3157.
- Honestetee**, *s. honorableness, honor*, E 422.
- Honestly**, *adv. honorably*, G 549.
- Honge**, *v. to hang*, C 790. See **Doon**.
- Hony**, *s. honey*, B 3537; F 614.
- Hool**, *adj. well*, F 161; *whole, perfect*, G 111, 117.
- Hoom**, *adv. homewards*, B 3548.
- Hoomliness**, *s. homeliness, domesticity*, E 429.
- Hoor**, *adj. hoary, gray*, C 743.
- Hoot**. See **Hote**.
- Hope**, *s. hope, expectation*, G 870.
- Hoppeteres**, *s. pl. dancers*, A 2017.
- Hord**, *s. hoard, treasure*, C 775.
- Horn**, *s. horn (musical instrument)*, H 90.
- Hors**, *s. a horse*, B 15.
- Horsly**, *adj. horse-like, like all that a horse should be*, F 194.
- Hose**, *s. hose, old stocking*, G 726; *Hosen*, *pl. B* 1923.
- Hoste**, *s. host*, B 1, 39; E 1.
- Hostelrye**, *s. hostelry*, G 589.
- Hostiler**, *s. innkeeper*, A 241.
- Hote**, *adj. hot, an epithet of Aries, as supposed to induce anger and heat of blood*, F 51.
- Houndes**, *s. pl. dogs*, E 1095.
- Houndfish**, *s. shark*, E 1825.
- Houped**, *pt. pl. whooped*, B 4590.
- Housbound**, *s. husband*, B 863.
- Housbondrye**, *s. economy*, A 4077.
- Housled**, *pp. having received the Eucharist*, I 1027.
- Humanitee**, *s. kindness*, E 92.
- Hurlest**, 2 *pr. s. dost hurl, dost whirl*, B 297.
- Hyde**, *v. hide, i. e. lie concealed*, F 141.

Hye, *ger.* to hasten; *hy the*, hasten thyself, be quick, G 1295.
Hye, *adv.* high, aloft, B 3592.
Hyne, *s.* hind, peasant, C 688.

I (*for I and Y*).

Iade, *s.* a jade, *i.e.* a miserable hack, B 4002.
Ialouslye, *s.* jealousy, C 366.
Iambeux, *s. pl.* leggings, leg-armor, B 2065.
Iane, *s.* a small coin, properly of Genoa, B 1925; E 999.
Iangle, *pr. pl.* talk, prate, F 220.
Ianglere, *s.* prater, babbler, A 560.
Ianglest, *2 pr. s.* chatterest, B 774.
Iangling, *s.* prating, idle talking, disputing, F 257; Iangling, I 649.
Iape, *s.* a trick, B 1629.
Iape, *ger.* to jest, H 4; **Iapen**, *v.* to jest, B 1883.
Ich, *pers. pron.* I, B 39.
Idus, *s. pl.* ides, F 47.
Ieet, *s.* jet, B 4051.
Iet, *s.* fashion, mode, A 682.
Iewerye, *s.* Jewry, Jews' quarter, B 1679.
Ignotum, *s.* an unknown thing, G 1457.
Ik, *pron.* I, A 3867.
Il-hayl, ill-luck to you, A 4089.
Impertinent, *adj.* not pertinent, irrelevant, E 54.
Importable, *adj.* intolerable, insufferable, E 1144.
Impresse, *pr. pl.* force themselves (upon), make an impression (upon), G 1071.
Impressioun, *s.* impression, remembrance, F 371.
In, *prep.* into, B 119.
In, *s.* inn, lodging, B 1097.
Induracioun, *s.* hardening, G 855.
Infect, *pp.* invalidated, A 320.
Infortunat, *adj.* unfortunate, inauspicious, B 302.
Infortune, *s.* misfortune, B 3591.
Ingot, *s.* an ingot, a mould for pouring metal into, G 1206.
Inne, *adv.* in, B 3193; within, G 880.
Inne, *prep.* in, F 578.
Inned, *pp.* housed, A 2192.
In-with, *prep.* within, B 1794; E 870.
Ioie, *s.* joy, B 3964. See **Ioye**.
Iolif, *adj.* joyful, A 3355.
Iolitee, joviality, C 780; F 278; amusement, B 2033; enjoyment, F 344.
Iolynesse, *s.* festivity, F 289.
Iordanes, *s. pl.* chamber-pots, C 305.
Ioye, *s.* joy. See **Ioie**.
Irous, *adj.* passionate, D 2086.
Iubbe, *s.* jug, A 3628.
Iugement, *s.* opinion, B 1038.
Iusten, *v.* joust, H 42.
Iuysse, *s.* justice, judgment, B 795.

K.

Karf. See **Kerve**.
Kechil, *s.* cake, D 1747.
Kembde, *pt. s.* combed, F 560; **Kembd**, *pp.* E 379.
Kempe, *adj.* shaggy, A 2134.
Kene, *adj.* bold, B 3439; F 57.
Kepe, *s.* heed, E 1058; *taken kepe*, take heed, F 348.
Kepe, *v.* keep, preserve; *I kepe han*, I care to have, G 1368; **Kepte**, *pt. s.* kept, E 223; *pt. pl.* regarded, tended, B 269; **Kepeth**, *imp. pl.* keep ye, B 764; *pr. s.* keeps, E 1133; observes, F 516; **Keping**, *pres. part.* keeping, tending, F 651; **Kept**, *pp.* E 1098.
Kerchef, *s.* kerchief, B 837.
Kerve, *v.* to carve, cut, F 158.
Kerver, *s.* carver, A 1899.
Kesse, *v.* to kiss, E 1057; **Keste**, *pt. s.* kissed, F 350; **Kiste**, E 679. See **Kist**.
Kid. See **Kythe**.
Kimelin, *s.* brewing-tub, A 3548.
Kin, *s.* kindred, race, G 829; *som kin*, of some kind, B 1137.
Kist, kissed; *been they kist*, they have kissed each other, B 1074.
Kitte, *pt. s.* cut, B 600, 1761.
Knarre, *s.* a knotted, thick-set fellow, A 549.
Knarry, *adj.* gnarled, A 1977.
Knave, *s.* boy, servant-lad, B 474; boy, male, E 444; *knave child*, man-child, boy, E 612; **Knaves**, *pl.* boys, lads, B 3087; **Knave**, *as adj.* male, B 722.
Knitte, *ger.* to knit, I 47; **Knittest thee**, *2 pr. s. refl.* knittest thyself, joinest thyself, art in conjunction, B 307; **Knit**, *pp.* knit, B 3224.
Knokked, *pt. s.* knocked, B 3721.
Knotte, *s.* knot, principal point of a story, gist of a tale, F 401, 407.
Knowe, *pp.* known, F 215; **Knowen**, *2 pr. pl.* ye know, B 128; **Knowestow**, knowest thou, B 367.
Knowe, *s.* knee; **Knowes**, *pl.* B 1719.
Knowleching, *s.* knowing, knowledge, G 1432.
Konning, *s.* cunning, skill, F 251.
Kyked, *pt. s.* peeped, A 3445.
Kyte, *s.* kite (bird), F 624.
Kythe, *pr. s. subj.* may show, B 636; **Kythed**, *pp.* shown, G 1054.

L.

Laas, *s.* lace, band, G 574.
Labbing, *pres. part.* blabbing, babbling, E 2428.
Labour, *s.* endeavor, B 381.
Lacerte, *s.* muscle, A 2753.
Lachesse, *s.* negligence, I 720.

- Ladde**, *pt. s.* conducted, B 3747.
- Lafte**, *pt. s.* ceased, B 3496; *1 pt. s.* I left, C 762.
- Lake**, *s.* a kind of fine white linen cloth, B 2048.
- Lakked**, *pt. s.* wanted, lacked; *him lakked*, there lacked to him, *i.e.* he lacked, F 16; *Lakketh*, *pr. s.* lacks, G 498.
- Lampe**, *s.* lamina, thin plate, G 764.
- Langour**, *s.* languishment, slow starvation, B 3597.
- Lappe**, *s.* lap, fold of the dress, F 441; skirt or lappet of a garment, G 12; a wrapper, E 585.
- Lasse**, *adj.* less, C 602; *adj. pl.* smaller, of less rank; *lasse and more*, smaller and greater, *i.e.* all, E 67.
- Last**, *s. pl.* lasts, *i.e.* burdens, loads, B 1628.
- Lat**, *let*; *lat take*, let us take, G 1254.
- Late**, *adj.* late; *bet than never is late*, G 1410.
- Latitude**, *s.* latitude (in an astronomical sense), B 13.
- Laton**, *s.* latten, or latoun, a mixed metal, closely resembling brass, B 2067.
- Latoun**, *s.* a kind of brass, C 350.
- Launcegay**, *s.* a kind of lance, B 1942.
- Laureat**, *adj.* laureate, crowned with laurel, B 3886; E 31.
- Lay**, *s.* song, lay, B 1959; religious belief, faith, creed, B 572; F 18.
- Lazar**, *s.* leper, A 242.
- Lede**, *v.* to govern, B 434; *pr. s. subj.* may bring, B 357. See **Ladde**.
- Leden**, *adj.* leaden, G 728.
- Ledene**, *s. dat.* language, talk, F 435.
- Leed**, *s.* lead, G 406; leaden vessel, A 202.
- Leef**, *adj.* dear, precious, G 1467; *yow so leef*, so dear to you, so desired by you, C 760. See **Leve**.
- Leef**, *adv.* dear; **Lever**, *comp.* dearer, liefer, F 572.
- Leef**, *s.* a leaf, E 1211.
- Leefful**, *adj.* lawful, I 41.
- Leefsel**, *s.* bower, I 411.
- Leek**, *s.* leek, *i.e.* thing of small value, G 795.
- Lees**, *s.* leash, G 19.
- Leet**, *pt. s.* let, caused (to be), B 959; *imp. s.* let, C 731; *pt. s.* let, E 82; caused, as in *leet don cryen*, caused to be proclaimed, F 45; *leet make*, caused to be made, B 3349; *leet binde*, caused to be bound, B 1810. See **Lat**, **Lete**.
- Lefte**, *1 pt. s.* I left off, F 670.
- Lemman**, *s.* lover; lit. dear man, B 917; sweet-heart, B 3253.
- Lendes**, *s. pl.* loins, A 3237.
- Lene**, *adj.* lean, B 4003.
- Lene**, *ger.* to lend, G 1024, 1037.
- Lenger**, *adv. comp.* longer; *ever lenger the more*, the longer, the more, E 687; F 404.
- Lente**, *s.* Lent, E 12.
- Leos**, *s. pl.* people, G 103, 106.
- Leoun**, *s.* lion, B 475; G 178.
- Leopardes**, *s. pl.* leopards, B 3451.
- Lepe**, *pr. pl.* leap, G 915.
- Lere**, *s.* flesh, skin, B 2047.
- Lere**, *v.* learn, B 1702; *pr. pl.* learn, F 104; *ger.* to learn, B 181; *pr. s. subj.* may learn, G 607.
- Lerne**, *ger.* to teach, G 844; **Lerned** of, taught by, G 748.
- Lerned**, *pp. as adj.* learned, B 1168.
- Lerninge**, *s.* instruction, G 184.
- Lesinge**, *s.* losing, loss; *for lesinge*, for fear of losing, B 3750.
- Lest**, *s.* desire, E 619.
- Leste**, *adj. superl. as s.* least; *atte leste*, at the least, at least, B 38.
- Let**, *pt. s.* caused, permitted, B 373. See **Lat**.
- Lete**, *v.* let, B 3524; forsake, B 325; *1 pr. s.* I leave, B 96. See **Lat**, **Leet**.
- Lette**, *v.* to hinder, delay; *used intrans.* to cause delay, B 1117; to hinder, B 2116; to oppose, stay, B 3306; *pt. s. intrans.* delayed, E 389.
- Lette**, *s.* let, impediment, hindrance, delay, E 300.
- Letterure**, *s.* literature, B 3686; literature, book-lore, G 846.
- Lettres**, *s. pl.* letters, B 736.
- Letuarie**, *s.* electuary, C 307.
- Leve**, *v.* believe; **Levestow**, believest thou, G 212.
- Leve**, *v.* to leave, give up, E 250; *ger.* to forsake, G 287.
- Leve**, *3 imp. s.* (God) grant, B 1873.
- Leve**, *adj. voc.* beloved, G 257; *pl.* dear, valued, F 341. See **Leef**.
- Leveful**, *adj.* permissible, praiseworthy, allowable, G 5.
- Lever**, *adj. comp.* liefer, dearer, more desirable, B 3628; rather; *me were lever*, it would be dearer to me, I had rather, C 615.
- Levesel**, *s.* leafy bower, A 4061.
- Lewedly**, *adv.* ignorantly, B 47; ignorantly, ill, G 430; H 59.
- Leye**, *v.* to lay a wager, bet, G 596; *1 pr. pl.* we lay out, we expend, G 783; **Leyden** forth, *pt. pl.* brought forward, B 213.
- Leyt**, *s.* flame, lightning, I 839.
- Lia**, *put for* Lat. Lia, *i.e.* Leah in the book of Genesis, G 96.
- Libel**, *s.* bill of complaint, D 1595.
- Licentiat**, one licensed by the Pope to hear confessions, independently of the local ordinaries, A 220.
- Liche**, *adj.* like; *it liche*, like it, F 62.
- Liche-wake**, *s.* corpse-watch, A 2958.
- Licour**, *s.* juice, C 452.

Lief, *adj.* dear, cherished, E 479; *goode lief my wyf*, my dear good wife, B 3084. See Leef.

Ligeance, *s.* allegiance, B 895.

Liggen, *v.* to lie, lie down, B 2101.

Likerous, *adj.* gluttonous, dainty, greedy, C 540.

Limitour, *s.* licensed beggar, A 209.

Linage, *s.* lineage, kindred, B 999.

Lind, *s.* lime-tree, A 2922.

Linde, *s.* linden-tree, E 1211.

Lipsed, *pt. s.* lisped, A 264.

List, *s.* ear, D 634.

Listen, *pr. pl.* list, choose, B 2234.

Listeth, *imp. pl.* listen ye, B 1902, 2023.

Litarge, *s.* litharge, G 775.

Lite, *adj.* little, B 109. See Lyte.

Litherly, *adv.* badly, A 3299.

Liverie, *s.* livery, A 363.

Livestow, *for* livest thou, C 719.

Lixt, *liet*, D 1618.

Lode, *s.* load, A 2918.

Lodemenage, *s.* pilotage, A 403.

Lode-sterre, *s.* lodestar, A 2059.

Lofte, *s. dat.* air; *on lofte*, in the air, B 277.

Logge, *s.* a lodging, B 4043.

Lokeden, *pt. pl.* looked; Loked, *pt. s.* looked, E 340; Loketh, *imp. pl.* look ye, behold, G 1329; search ye, C 578.

Loken, *pp.* locked, enclosed, B 4065.

Lokkes, locks of hair, A 81.

Loller, *s.* a loller, a lollard, B 1173.

Lond, *s.* land; country, B 3548; Londe, land, B 522.

Lone, *s.* loan, D 1861.

Long, *prep.*; the phrase *wher-on . . . long* = *long on wher*, along of what, G 930; *long on*, along of, because of, G 922.

Longe, *adv.* long, a long while, B 1626, 3300.

Longes, *s. pl.* lungs, A 2752.

Longing for, *i. e.* belonging to, suitable for, F 39.

Loos, *s.* praise, G 1368.

Looth, *adj.* loath, displeasing; *me were looth*, it would be displeasing to me, B 91.

Lordings, *s. pl.* sirs, B 573; C 329; I 15.

Lore, *s.* study, G 842; lore, learning, experience, knowledge, B 4, 1168; E 87, 788.

Lorel, *s.* rascal, D 273.

Los, *s.* loss, B 27, 28; F 450.

Los. See Loos.

Losengerie, *s.* flattery, false praise, I 613.

Losten, *pt. pl.* lost, G 398.

Lotinge, *pres. part.* lurking, G 186.

Loude, *def. adj.* loud, F 268.

Lough, *pt. s.* laughed, B 3740.

Louke, *s.* fellow-rascal, A 4415.

Loute, *v.* to bow down, B 3352.

Loveden, *pt. pl.* loved; Lovede, *pt. s.* loved, E 413; Loveth, *imp. pl.* love ye, E 370.

Love-drury, *s.* affection, B 2085.

Lovere, *s.* a lover, F 546.

Loves, *s. pl.* loaves, B 503.

Lovyere, *s.* lover, A 80.

Lowe, *adv.* in a low voice, F 216.

Luce, *s.* pike, A 350.

Lucre, *s.* lucre, gain; *lucre of vilanye*, villainous lucre, vile gain, B 1681; profit, G 1402.

Lulleth, *pr. s.* lulls, soothes, B 839.

Luna, *s.* the moon, G 826; a name for silver, G 1440.

Lunarie, *s.* lunar, moon-wort, G 800.

Lure, *s.* a hawk's lure, the bait by which a hawk was tempted to return to the fowler's hand, H 72.

Lust, *pr. s. impers.* it pleases, E 322; *Luste, pers.* was pleased, desired, G 1344.

Lustier, *adj. comp.* more joyous, G 1345.

Lustinesse, *s.* pleasure, A 1939.

Lusty, *adj.* jocund, F 272; lusty, H 41.

Lyard, *adj.* gray, D 1563.

Lycorys, *s.* licorice, B 1951, 2045.

Lyf, *s.* life; *his lyf*, during his life, B 3369.

Lyfly, *adv.* in a lifelike way, A 2087.

Lyk. See Liche.

Lyke, to please; Lyken, *v.* to please, B 2128; Lyketh, *pr. s.* it pleases, E 311; *us lyketh you*, it pleases us with respect to you, E 106; *how lyketh thee my wyf*, how does it please you with respect to my wife, E 1031; Lykned, *pp.* likened, compared, B 91.

Lyking, *s.* pleasure, liking, delight, B 3499.

Lyklihede, *s.* likelihood, probability, B 1786.

Lym, *s.* lime, G 910.

Lymaille, *s.* filings of any metal, G 1162; Lymail, G 1164.

Lymrod, *s.* lime-rod, lime-twig, B 3574.

Lyte, *adv.* in a small degree, G 632, 699. See Lite.

Lyve, *dat. from* Lyf, whence *on lyve*, during life, *i. e.* alive, F 423.

Lyves, *s. pl. gen.* souls', lives', G 56; *Lyves, gen. sing. used as adv.* living, E 903.

Lyvinge, *s.* manner of life, C 847.

M.

Maad, *pp.* made, B 3607.

Mace, *s.* a mace, club, B 2003.

Maille, *s.* mail, ringed armor, E 1202.

Maister, *s.* master, B 1627, 3128.

Maister-tour, *s.* principal tower, F 226.

Maistres, *s. pl.* masters, B 141.

Maistrye, *s.* mastery, victory, B 3582; governance, control, B 3689; Maistrie, a masterly operation, G 1060.

Make, *s.* mate, wife, B 700; husband, G 224.

Maked, *pt. s.* made, B 3318; *pp.* B 1722; Maad, B 3607; Makestow, *i. e.* makest thou, B 371.

- Male**, *s.* bag, wallet, C 920; G 566.
Malefice, *s.* evil-doing, I 341.
Malisoun, *s.* curse, G 1245.
Malliable, *adj.* malleable, such as can be worked by the hammer, G 1130.
Man, *s.* man, esp. a devoted servant, one who has vowed homage, B 3331; *used for* one, B 43.
Manace, *s.* menace, A 2003.
Manasinge, *s.* threatening, A 2035.
Manere, *s.* manner; *of manere*, in his behavior, F 546; *maner pley*, kind of game, C 627; *maner chaunce*, kind of luck, G 527.
Mannish, *adj.* man-like, *i.e.* unwomanly, B 782.
Mansioun, *s.* mansion (a term in astrology), F 50.
Manye, *s.* mania, A 1374.
Marbul, *s.* marble, F 500.
Marbul-stones, *s. pl.* blocks of marble, B 1871.
Marchaunt, *s.* merchant, B 132.
Marie, *interj.* marry, *i.e.* by St. Mary, G 1062.
Maried, *pt. s. trans.* he caused to be married, E 1130.
Mark, *s.* a piece of money, of the value of 13 s. 4 d. in England, G 1026; *Mark, pl. i.e.* marks, C 390.
Market-beter, *s.* bully at fairs, A 3936.
Markis, *s.* a marquis, E 64.
Markisesse, *s.* a marchioness, E 394.
Mary, *s.* marrow, C 542.
Mary-bones, *s. pl.* marrow-bones, A 380.
Masednesse, *s.* amaze, E 1061.
Maselyne, *s.* a kind of drinking-cup, B 2042.
Mat, *adj.* struck dead, defeated utterly, B 935.
Materes, *pl.* materials (of a solid character), G 779; *Matires, gen. pl.* of the materials, G 770.
Maugree, *prep.* in spite of; *maugree Philistiens*, in spite of the Philistines, B 3238.
Maumetrye, *s.* Mahometanism, B 236.
Maunciple, *s.* mancepl, H 25; I 1.
Mawe, *s.* maw, stomach, B 486.
May, *s.* maiden, B 851.
Mayde, *s.* maid, maiden, B 1636.
Maydenhede, *s.* maidenhood, G 126.
Mayntene, *pr. s. imp.* may he maintain, E 1171.
Maystrye. See **Maistrye**.
Mede, *s.* mead, drink, B 2042.
Mede, *s.* reward, a bribe, B 3579.
Medle, *v.* meddle, take part in, G 1184; *Medleth, imp. pl.* meddle, G 1424.
Medlee, *adj.* of mixed stuff, A 328.
Meel, *s.* meal, B 466.
Meiny. See **Meynee**.
Memorie, *s.* mention, remembrance, B 3164.
Mendinants, *s. pl.* begging friars, D 1906.
Menestow, *meanest thou*, G 309.
Mening, *s.* meaning, intent, F 151.
Mere, *s.* mare, A 541.
Meridional, *adj.* southern, F 263.
Merier, *adj.* pleasanter, B 2024.
Mervaille, *s.* marvel, wonder, E 1186; *Merveille*, E 248; *merveille of*, wonder at, F 87.
Merveillous, *adj.* marvellous, B 1643.
Meschaunce, *s.* misery, a miserable condition, B 3204; *with meschaunce*, with ill luck (to him), H 11.
Mescheef, *s.* tribulation, trouble, H 76; *Meschief*, misfortune, B 3513.
Mesel, *s.* leper, I 624.
Messenger, *s.* messenger, B 6.
Messe, *s.* mass, B 1413.
Meste, *adj. superl.* most, *i.e.* highest in rank, most considerable, E 131.
Mester, *s.* occupation, A 1340.
Mesurable, *adj.* moderate, C 515; F 362.
Met, *s.* measure, I 799.
Metamorphoseos, *gen. s.* (the book) of Metamorphosis; it should be *pl. Metamorphoseon*, B 93.
Mete, *s.* food, meat, F 173, 618.
Meth, *s.* mead, a drink, A 2279.
Meynee, *s.* followers, army, B 3532; attendants, suite, F 391.
Milksop, *s.* a piece of bread sopped in milk; hence, anything soft, especially a weak, effeminate man, B 3100.
Minde, *dat.* memory, B 527; *in minde*, in remembrance, B 1843.
Ministre, *s.* minister, B 168.
Minstralcye, *s.* minstrelsy, a playing upon instruments of music, the sound made by a band of minstrels, F 268.
Miracle, *s.* miraculous story, legend, B 1881.
Mirre, *s.* myrrh, A 2938.
Mirthe, *s.* pleasure, amusement, A 766.
Mis, *adj.* amiss, wrong, blameworthy, G 999.
Misbileve, *s.* belief of trickery, suspicion, G 1213.
Misboden, *pp.* abused, harmed, A 909.
Misdeparteth, *pr. s.* parts or divides amiss, B 107.
Misdooth, *pr. s.* doeth amiss to, ill-treats, B 3112.
Misgovernance, *s.* misconduct, B 3202.
Misgyed, *pp.* misguided, misconducted, B 3723. See **Gye**.
Mishap, *s.* ill luck, B 3435.
Mislay, *pt. s.* lay awry, A 3647.
Mister, *s.* craft, A 613; *what mister men*, what manner of men. A 1710.
Mistriste, *v.* mistrust, C 369.
Miteyn, *s.* mitten, glove, C 372.
Mo; *lymes mo*, at more times, at other times, E 449; *mo*, more than her, others, E 1039; *othere mo*, others besides, G 1001; *na mo*, no more, none else, B 695. See **More**.

Moche, *adj.* much, G 611; many, G 673.
Modres, *gen.* mother's, C 729; G 1243.
Moebles, *s. pl.* movable goods, personal property, G 540.
Moeved, *pt. s.* moved, disturbed, B 1136.
Moevere, *s.* mover, A 2987.
Mollificacioun, *s.* mollifying, softening, G 854.
Mone, *gen.* moon's, B 2070; **Mones**, *gen.* moon's, I 10.
Monstres, *s. pl.* monsters, B 3302.
Moorning, *s.* mourning, B 621.
Moot. See **Mot**.
Moralitee, *s.* morality, B 3687; moral tale, I 38.
Mordred, *pp.* murdered, E 725.
Mordring, *s.* murdering, A 2001.
More, *pl.* more and lesse, greater and lesser, all alike, B 3433.
More, *adv.* more, further, in a greater degree, B 3745.
Mormal, *s.* cancer, sore, or gangrene, A 386.
Morne, *adj.* morning, A 358.
Morsel, *s.* a morsel; *morsel breed*, morsel of bread, B 3624.
Mortifye, *v.* to mortify; lit. to kill; used of producing change by chemical action, G 1431.
Mortreux, a kind of soup or pottage, A 384.
Morwe, *s.* morrow, morning; *by the morwe*, in the morning, early in the day, H 16.
Mosel, *s.* muzzle, A 2151.
Mot; *mot I thee*, may I thrive, C 309; *foule moot thee falle*, foully (*i.e.* ill) may it happen to thee, H 40; *Moste, us moste*, it must be for us, *i.e.* it should be our resolve, G 946; **Moot**, *1 pr. s.* I must, E 872; **Mote**, *subj. ; mote I thee*, may I thrive, B 2007.
Mottelee, *s.* motley, A 271.
Motyf, *s.* motive, incitement, B 628.
Moulen, *v.* moulder, B 32.
Mountance, *s.* amount, quantity, C 863.
Mowled, *pp.* grown mouldy, A 3870.
Moyste, *adj.* fresh, new, B 1954.
Moysty, *adj.* new (applied to ale), H 60.
Muchel, *adj.* much, a great deal of, F 349.
Mulloke, *s.* rubbish, refuse, confused heap of materials, G 938, 940.
Multiplicacioun, *s.* multiplying, *i.e.* the art of alchemy, G 849.
Multiplye, *v.* to make gold and silver by the arts of alchemy, G 669, 731.
Murthe, *s.* mirth, joy, E 1123.
Murye, *adj.* merry, A 1386.
Myle, *s. pl.* miles, G 555.
Myn, *poss.* mine, my (used before a vowel), B 40; (used after a name), E 365.
Mynour, *s.* miner, A 2465.
Myte, *s.* mite, thing of no value, G 511, 633.

N.

Naddre, *s.* adder, E 1786.
Nadstow, hadst thou not, A 4088.
Naille, *imp. s. 3 p.* let it nail, let it fasten, E 1184.
Naked, *pp. as adj.* destitute, void, weak, G 486.
Nakers, *s. pl.* drums, A 2511.
Nale; *atte nale*, at the ale-house, D 1349.
Nam, *pt. s.* took, G 1297.
Namely, *adv.* especially, C 402.
Na-mo, for Na mo, no more, F 573; **Na-more**, F 289.
Nappeth, *pr. s.* naps, slumbers, nods, H 9.
Nart, for Ne art, art not, G 499.
Nat, for Ne at, nor at, B 290.
Nath, for Ne hath, hath not, A 923.
Naught, *adv.* not, B 1701; not so, G 269.
Nay, *opposed to yea*, E 355; *answers a direct question*, B 1793; *it is no nay*, there is no denying it, B 1956.
Nayles, *s. pl.* nails, B 3366.
Nayte, *v.* say no to, deny, I 1013.
Ne, *adv.* not; *ne dooth*, do ye not, C 745.
Nede, *adv.* necessarily, needs, G 1280.
Nede, *v.* to be necessary, B 871; **Nedeth**, *pr. s.* it needs it, it needs, F 65; **Neded**, *pt. s.* it needed, E 457.
Nedes, *s. pl.* necessary things, business, B 174; needs, G 178.
Nedes-cost, *adv.* of necessity, A 1477.
Nedles, *s. gen.* needle's, G 440.
Needles, *adv.* needlessly, E 621; **Needless**, without a cause, E 455.
Neen, *adj.* none, no, A 4185.
Neer, *adj.* nearer, G 721.
Neet, *s.* neat, cattle, A 597.
Neigh, *adj.* near, high, F 49.
Nekke-boon, *s.* nape of the neck, lit. neck-bone, B 669, 1839.
Nempnen, *v.* to name, B 507; **Nempne**, *v.* to name, tell, F 318.
Ner, *adv. comp.* nearer; *ner and ner*, nearer and nearer, B 1710.
Nercotikes, *s. pl.* narcotics, A 1472.
Nere, *pt. s. subj.* were not (*put for ne were*), B 547.
Nest, *s.* nest; *wikked nest*, *i.e.* *mau ni*, or *Mauny*, B 3576.
Nevene, *pr. pl. subj.* may name, may mention, G 1473.
Never, *adv.* never, B 87; *never the neer*, never the nearer, none the nearer, G 721.
Neveradel, *adv.* not a bit, C 670.
Newew, *s.* nephew, B 3594.
Newfangel, *adj.* newfangled, taken with novelty, F 618.
New-fangelnesse, *s.* fondness for novelty, F 610.

Nexste, *adj. sup.* nearest, B 1814.
Nigard, *s.* niggard, B 4105.
Nighter-tale, the night-time, A 97.
Nigromancians, *s. pl.* magicians, I 603.
Nil, *1 pr. s.* I desire not, I dislike, E 646.
Nin, *for Ne in, nor in*, F 35.
Nobles, *pl.* nobles (the coin worth 6s. 8d.), C 907.
Noblesse, *s.* nobility, magnificence, B 3438; high honor, B 3208.
Nobley, *s.* nobility, assembly of nobles, G 449; state, F 77.
Noght, *adv.* not, B 94, 112.
Nombre, *s.* number, A 716.
Nome, *pp.* of *Nimen*.
Nones, for the, for the once, for this special occasion, for the nonce, B 1165.
Nonnes, *s. pl. gen.* nuns', B 3999.
Noon, *adj.* none, B 102; *pl.* B 89.
Noot, *for Ne wot, 1 pr. s.* I know not, B 892.
Norishinge, *s.* nurture, bringing up, E 1040.
Nortelrye, *s.* good manners, A 3967.
Nose-thirles, *pl.* nostrils, A 557.
Not. See **Noot**.
Notabilitee, *s.* a thing worthy to be known, B 4399.
Notable, *adj.* notorious, B 1875.
Note, *s.* note (of music), B 1737.
Note, *s.* need, business, A 4068.
Notemuge, *s.* nutmeg, B 1953.
Not-head, *s.* crop-head, A 100.
No-thing, *adv.* in no respect, B 575; not at all, C 404.
Notified, *pp.* made known, proclaimed, B 256.
Nouth, now; *as nouth*, at present, A 462.
Now and now, *adv.* at times, from time to time, occasionally, F 430.
Nowches, *s. pl.* jewels, E 382.
Ny, *adv.* nigh, nearly; *wel ny*, almost, E 82.
Nyce, *adj.* foolish, weak, B 1088.
Nycetee, *s.* folly, G 463.

O.

O, *adj.* one, B 52. See **Oo**.
Obeisant, *adj.* obedient, E 66.
Obeisaunce, *s.* obedience, E 24, 502; obedient act, E 230; Obeisaunces. *pl.* submissive acts, acts expressing obedient attention, F 515.
Observe, *v.* to give countenance to, favor, B 1821.
Occident, *s.* West, B 297.
Occupy, *v.* to occupy, take up, F 64; *Occupyeth*, *pr. s.* takes up, dwells in, B 424.
Octogamy, *s.* marrying eight times, D 33.
Of, *adv.* off, away, B 3748.
Of, *prep.* during, B 510; with, G 626; by, E 70; with, for, B 1779; E 33; as regards, with re-

spect to, B 90; *of grace*, by his favor, out of his favor, E 178.
Offensioun, offence, damage, A 2416.
Office, *s.* duty, employment, B 3446; *houses of office*, servants' offices, pantries, larders, etc., E 264.
Offreth, *imp. pl. 2 p.* offer ye, C 910.
Of-newe, *adv.* newly, lately, E 938.
Of-taken, *pp.* taken off, taken away, B 1855.
Ofte, *adv.* often, B 278; Offer, oftener, E 215.
Ofte, *adj. pl.* many, frequent, E 226.
Oghte, *pt. s.* became; *as him oghte*, as it became him, B 1097; *pt. s. subj.* it should behave us, E 1150. See **Oughte**.
Oistre, *s.* oyster, A 182.
Oliveres, *s. pl.* olive yards, B 3226.
On, *prep.* upon, concerning, B 48; on, in, at; *on eve*, in the evening; *on morwe*, in the morning, E 1214; *on reste*, at rest, F 379.
On, *adj.* one; *everich on*, every one, B 1164. See **O**, **Oon**.
Ones, *adv.* once, B 588; of one mind, united in design, C 696; *at ones*, at once, H 10.
On-lofte, *adv.* aloft, *i. e.* still above ground, E 229.
Oo, *adj.* one, G 207. See **O**, **Oon**.
Oon; one and the same, C 333; *that oon*, the one, C 666; the same, B 2142; the same thing, alike, F 537; *oon the faireste*, one who was the fairest, one of the fairest, E 212; *ever in oon*, continually alike, constantly in the same manner, E 602; *many oon*, many a one, E 775.
Open-ers, *s. pl.* medlars, A 3871.
Open-headed, *pp.* bareheaded, D 645.
Oppresse, *v.* to put down, G 4.
Or, *adv.* ere, before, G 314.
Ordenaunce, *s.* ordaining, governance, arrangement, B 763; provision, B 250.
Ordeyned, *pp.* appointed, F 177.
Ordre, *s.* order, class, G 995.
Organs, *s. pl.* "organs," the old equivalent of organ, G 134.
Orient, the East, B 3504.
Orpiment, *s.* orpiment, G 759, 774, 823.
Osanne, *i. e.* Hosannah, B 642.
Otes, *s. pl.* oats, C 375.
Other, *adj. pl.* other, B 3344; **Other**, *sing.*; *whence* that other = the other, *answering to* that oon = the one, F 496.
Others, *pron. sing.* each other's, lit. of the other, C 476.
Otherweyes, *adv.* otherwise, E 1072.
Otherwyse, *adv.* on any other condition, F 534.
Othes, *s. pl.* oaths, C 472; F 528.
Ouche, *s.* jewel, D 743.
Oughte, *pt. s. subj.* it would become, *as in* oughte us = it would become us, it would

be our duty, G 14; Oghten, *1 pt. pl.* we ought, G 6; Oghte, *pt. s. indic.* it was fit, it was due, E 1120.

Oules, *s. pl.* awls, D 1730.

Ounces, *s. pl.* small pieces, A 677.

Out-caughte, *pt. s.* caught out, drew out, B 1861.

Outen, *v.* to come out with, utter, display, exhibit, E 2438; G 834.

Outerly, *adv.* utterly, entirely, G 335.

Out-hees, *s.* hue and cry, A 2012.

Outrageous, *adj.* violent, excessive, C 650.

Outraye, *v.* pass beyond control, E 643.

Outrely, *adv.* utterly, C 849.

Out-taken, *pp.* excepted (lit. taken out), B 277.

Oversloppe, *s.* upper garment, G 633.

Owene, *adj.* own, B 3198; *pl.* B 3584.

Oweth, *pr. s.* owneth, owns, possesses, C 361.

Oxes, *gen. sing.* ox's, E 207.

Oxe-stalle, *s.* ox-stall, E 398.

Oynement, *s.* ointment, A 631.

Oynons, *s. pl.* onions, A 634.

P.

Paas, *s.* pace, step, G 575; *goon a paas*, go at a footpace, C 866.

Pace; *to pace of*, to pass from, B 205; *1 pr. s. subj.* er I pace = ere I depart, ere I die, F 494; *pr. s. subj.* may pass away, may depart, E 1092.

Palinge, *s.* the making a perpendicular stripe, I 417.

Palled, *adj.* enfeebled, languid, H 55.

Pan, *s.* brain-pan, skull, A 1165.

Panade, *s.* knife, A 3929.

Panne, *s.* a pan, G 1210.

Papeer, *s.* pepper, G 762.

Papeiay, *s.* a popinjay, a parrot, B 1957.

Paradys, *s.* paradise, heaven, B 3200.

Paraments, *s. pl.* rich array, A 2501.

Paramour, *i.e. par amour*, for love, B 2033.

Paraventure, *adv.* peradventure, perhaps, B 190; by chance, E 234.

Parde! *interj.* answering to F. *par Dieu*; Pardee, B 1977; E 1234.

Pardoner, *s.* seller of indulgences, A 543.

Parfay, *interj.* by my faith, B 110; by my faith, verily, B 849.

Parfit, *adj.* perfect, G 353.

Parfournest, *2 pr. s.* performest, B 1797; Parfourned, *pp.* B 1646.

Parissshens, *s. pl.* parishioners, A 482.

Paritorie, *s.* pellitory, *Parietaria officinalis*, G 581.

Parlement, *s.* parliament, deliberation, A 1306.

Parting-felawes, *s. pl.* partners, I 637.

Party, *s.* part, portion, B 17.

Parvys, *s.* church-porch, A 310.

Pas, *s.* pace, B 399; Pas, *pl.* paces, movements, B 306. See Paas.

Passant, *adj.* surpassing, A 2107.

Passe, *imp. s. or pl.* pass (over), go (on), proceed, B 1633; Passe of, *1 pr. s.* pass by, F 288; Passeth, *pr. s.* passes away, F 404; Passed, *pp.* past, spent, E 610; Passing, *pres. part.* surpassing, extreme, E 240. See Pace.

Passing, *adj.* surpassing, excellent, G 614.

Passioun, *s.* passion, suffering, B 1175.

Pax, *s.* a painted tablet kissed during the celebration of mass, I 407.

Payens, *pl.* pagans, B 534.

Payndemayn, *s.* bread of a peculiar whiteness, B 1915.

Pecunial, *adj.* pecuniary, D 1314.

Pees, *s.* peace, B 130; *in pees*, in silence, B 228.

Pees, *interj.* peace! hush! B 836; G 951.

Pekke, to pick, B 4157.

Penaunt, *s.* a penitent, one who does penance, B 3124.

Penible, *adj.* painstaking, careful to please, E 714.

Penner, *s.* pen-case, E 1879.

Penoun, a pennant or ensign borne at the end of a lance, A 978.

Pens, *s. pl.* pence, C 402.

Peraventure, *adv.* perhaps, perchance, C 935. See Paraventure.

Perce, Percen, *v.* to pierce, B 2014.

Percinge, *s.* piercing; *for percinge*, to prevent any piercing, B 2052.

Perdurable, *adj.* lasting, I 75.

Pere, *s.* peer, equal, B 3244; F 678.

Peregryn, *adj.* peregrine, *i.e.* foreign, F 428.

Pere-ionette, *s.* pear-tree, A 3248.

Perfit, *adj.* perfect, A 1271. See Parfit.

Perissed, *pp.* destroyed, I 579.

Perree, *s.* jewelry, precious stones, gems, B 3495.

Pers, of a sky-blue color, A 439.

Perseveraunce, *s.* continuance, G 443.

Persevereth, *pr. s.* lasteth, C 497.

Perseveringe, *s.* perseverance, G 117.

Person, *s.* parson, I 23; Persone, B 1170; Persoun, A 478.

Perturben, *pres. pl.* disturb, A 906.

Peter, *interj.* by St. Peter, G 665.

Peyne, *s.* pain, suffering, B 2134; trouble, care, F 509; upon peyne, under a penalty, E 586.

Peyne, *1 pr. s. refl.* I peyne me = I take pains, C 330; Peyned hir, *pt. s. refl.* took pains, E 976; Peyneth hir, *pr. s. refl.* endeavors, B 320.

Peyre, *s.* pair, A 2121.

Peytre, *s.* properly, the breastplate of a horse in armor, G 564.

Pigges-nye, *s.* pig's eye, a term of endearment, A 3268.

- Pighte**, *ft. s.* pitched, A 2689. *Pt. t. of* Picchen.
Pilours, *s. pl.* plunderers, A 1007.
Pilwe-beer, *s.* pillow-case, A 694.
Pin, *s.* pin, small peg, F 127, 316.
Pinchen, *ger.* to find fault, H 74.
Pissemyre, *s.* ant, D 1825.
Pistel, *s.* epistle, E 1154.
Pिताunce, *s.* portion of food, A 224.
Pite, *s.* pity; Pitee, B 292.
Pitously, *adv.* piteously, sadly, pitiaibly, B 3729.
Place, *s.* manor-house, residence of a chief person in a village or small town, B 1910.
Plages, *s. pl.* regions, B 543.
Plastres, *s. pl.* plasters, F 636.
Plat, *adv.* flat, B 1865; flatly, bluntly, B 3947.
Plate, *s.* stiff iron defence for a hauberk, B 2055.
Platte, *adj. dat.* flat, flat side (of a sword), F 162.
Play. See **Pley**.
Playn, *adj.* plain; *in short and playn*, in brief plain terms, E 577.
Playn, *s.* a plain, B 24; Playne, E 59.
Pleinte, *s.* complaint, lament, B 66.
Plesance, *s.* pleasing behavior, F 509; Ple-saunce, pleasure, will, E 501; kindness, E 1111.
Plese, *v.* please; Plesen, F 707.
Pley, *s.* play, sport, diversion, E 10, 1030.
Pleye, *v.* to amuse one's self, B 3524, 3666; Pleying, *pres. ft.* amusing herself, F 410.
Pleyn, *adj.* plain, clear, B 324.
Pleyn, *adv.* plainly, B 3947; openly, E 637.
Pliighte, *fp.* pledged, C 702.
Plighte, *fp.* plucked, D 790; *ft. s.* pulled, B 15.
Plye, *v.* bend, E 1169.
Point, *s.* point; *fro point to point*, from beginning to end, B 3652; *point for point*, exactly, in every detail, E 577.
Point-devys, *s.* point-device, F 560.
Poke, *s.* pocket, bag, A 3780.
Pokets, *s. pl.* pockets, *i. e.* little bags, G 808.
Pokkes, *s. pl.* pocks, pustules, C 358.
Polcat, *s.* polecat, C 855.
Pollicy, *s.* public business, C 600.
Pollax, *s.* pole-axe, A 2544.
Polyve, *s.* pulley, F 184.
Pomel, *s.* crown, top, A 2689.
Pomely, *adj.* dapple; Pomely-gris, dapple-gray, G 559.
Popelote, *s.* puppet, A 3254.
Popet, *s.* poppet, puppet, doll; spoken ironically, and here applied to a corpulent person, B 1891.
Popper, *s.* dagger, A 3931.
Poraille, *s.* poor folk, A 247.
Porphurie, *s.* porphyry, a slab of porphyry used as a mortar, G 775.
Porthors, *s.* breviary, B 1321.
Pose, *s.* cold in the head, H 62.
Possessioners, *s. pl.* members of endowed orders, D 1772.
Possessioun, *s.* large property, wealth, F 686.
Post, *s.* pillar, support, A 214.
Potage, *s.* broth, C 368.
Potestat, *s.* potentate, D 2017.
Pothecarie, *s.* apothecary, C 852.
Poudre, *s.* powder, G 760.
Poudre-marchaunt, *s.* flavoring powder, A 381.
Pound, *pl.* pounds, F 683.
Pounsoninge, *s.* puncturing, I 418.
Pouped, *fp.* blown, H 90.
Pouren, *1 pr. s.* we pore, gaze steadily, G 670.
Poverte, *s.* poverty, B 99; Povert, C 441.
Povre, *adj.* poor, B 116, 120.
Povre, *adv.* poorly, E 1043.
Povreliche, *adv.* poorly, in poverty, E 213.
Povrely, *adv.* poorly, A 1412.
Povrest, *adj. superl.* poorest, C 449.
Poynaunt, *adj.* pungent, A 352.
Poynt, *s.* a stop, G 1480.
Poyntel, *s.* pencil, stylus, D 1742.
Practisour, *s.* practitioner, A 422.
Preche, *v.* to preach, B 1179; Prechen, B 1177; Precheth, *imp. pl.* E 12.
Predicacioun, *s.* preaching, sermon, C 345, 407.
Preef, *s.* test, proof, G 968; the test, H 75.
Preferre, *pr. s. subj.* surpass, D 96.
Preise, *1 pr. s.* I praise, F 674.
Preiscence, *s.* foreknowledge, E 659.
Presence, *s.* presence; *in presence*, in company, in a large assembly, E 1207.
Prest, *s.* priest, B 1166.
Preve, *v.* prove; bide the test, G 645; to prove to be right, to succeed when tested, G 1212; Preved, *fp.* tested, G 1336; approved, E 28; exemplified, E 856; shown, F 481.
Preyed, *fp.* prayed, E 773; Preye, *pr. s.* pray, B 3995.
Preyere, *s.* prayer, G 256.
Pricasour, *s.* hard rider, A 189.
Prighte, *ft. s.* pricked, F 418.
Priked, *fp.* spurred, G 561; Prighte, *ft. s.* F 418; Prike, *2 p. s. subj.* B 2001; Prikke, prick, goad, torture, E 1038.
Prikinge, *s.* spurring, hard riding, B 1965.
Prikke, *s.* prick, point, critical condition, B 119.
Privee, *adj.* secret, privy, closely attendant, E 192; privy, private, secret, B 204.
Privee, *adv.* privately, secretly, F 531.
Prively, *adv.* secretly, B 21.
Privetee, *s.* secret counsel, secrecy, B 548.
Proces, *s.* narrative, history, occurrence of events, B 3511; *proces holde*, keep close to my story, F 658.
Profre, *2 pr. s. subj.* mayst proffer, mayst offer, G 489; Profred, *fp.* offered, E 152.

- Proheme, *s.* a proem, prologue, E 43.
 Prolle, 2 *pr. pl.* ye prowl, prowl about, search widely, G 1412.
 Proporcioned, *pp.* made in proportion, F 192.
 Propre, *adj.* fine, handsome, C 309; own, peculiar, B 3518; *of propre kinde*, by their own natural bent, F 610.
 Prospectyves, *s. pl.* perspective glasses, lenses, F 234.
 Prow, *s.* profit, advantage, C 300; G 609.
 Prye, *v.* to pry, look, peer, G 668.
 Pryme, *s.* the time between 6 and 9 A.M., B 1278, 4387; *fully pryme*, the end of the period of prime, *i.e.* nine o'clock, B 2015; *pryme large*, just past nine o'clock, F 360.
 Prymerole, *s.* primrose, A 3268.
 Prys, *s.* price, value, estimation, B 2087; fame, A 67.
 Pryvee, *adj.* secret, A 2460.
 Pulle, *v.* pluck; *pulle a finche*, pluck a pigeon, cheat a novice, A 652; Pulled, plucked, A 177.
 Pultrye, *s.* poultry, A 598.
 Purchase, *imp. s.* may (He) provide, B 873; *Purchasen, ger.* to purchase, acquire, G 1405.
 Purchasing, *s.* prosecuting, A 320.
 Purchasour, *s.* conveyancer, A 318.
 Purified, *pp.* embroidered, fringed, A 193.
 Purged, *pp.* absolved, cleansed (by baptism), G 181.
 Purpos, *s.* purpose, design, B 170; *it cam him to purpos*, he purposed, F 606.
 Purs, *s.* purse, F 148.
 Purtreye, *v.* draw, A 96.
 Purveyance, *s.* equipment, B 247; providence, B 483.
 Putours, *s. pl.* whoremongers, I 886.
 Pykepurs, *s.* pick-purse, A 1998.
 Pyne, *s.* suffering, B 1080; pain, suffering, the passion, B 2126; woe, torment, B 3420.
 Pype, *s.* pipe, musical instrument, B 2005.
 Pyrie, *s.* pear-tree, E 2217.

Q.

- Quad, *adj.* bad, B 1628.
 Quaille, *s.* quail, E 1206.
 Quaking, *pres. part.* quaking, E 317; Quaked, *pp.* B 3831; Quook, *pt. s.* quaked, shook, B 3394.
 Quakke, *s.* hoarseness, A 4152.
 Quelle, *v.* to kill, C 854; *imp. s.* may (he) kill, G 705.
 Quern, *s.* hand-mill, B 3264.
 Questemonger, *s. pl.* holders of inquests, I 797.
 Queynte, *adj.* quaint, curious, F 369.
 Queynte, *pt. s.* was quenched, A 2334.
 Queyntise, *s.* elegance, I 932; contrivance, I 733

- Quiken, *ger.* to make alive, quicken, G 481.
 Quinible, *s.* a part sung a fifth above the air, A 3332.
 Quirboilly, *s.* boiled leather, B 2065.
 Quit, *See* Quayte.
 Quilty, *adv.* freely, A 1792.
 Quook, *See* Quaking.
 Quayte, *v.* to acquit, free; *hir cost for to quayte*, to pay for her expenses, B 3564; Quayten, *v.* repay (lit. quit), G 1027; *quayte with*, to repay . . . with, G 1055; to satisfy, pay in full, B 354; *quyte hir whyle*, requite her time or trouble, lit. repay her time, *i.e.* her occupation, pains, trouble, B 584; 1 *pr. s.* I requite, C 420; Quit, *pp.* freed, G 66.

R.

- Raa, *s.* roe, A 4086.
 Rad, *pp.* read, G 211. *See* Rede.
 Raft, *pt. s.* raft, B 3288. *Pt. t.* and *pp.* of *Reven*.
 Rage, *s.* a raging wind, A 1985.
 Rage, *v.* play, toy wantonly, A 257.
 Raked, *pp.* raked, B 3323.
 Rake-stele, *s.* rake handle, D 949.
 Ram, *s.* the ram, the sign Aries, F 386.
 Rammish, *adj.* ramlike, strong-scented, G 887.
 Rampeth, *pr. s.* (lit. ramps, romps, rears, but here) rages, acts with violence, B 3094.
 Rancour, *s.* rancor, ill-feeling, H 97; rancor, malice, E 432, 747.
 Rape, *v.* snatch up; *rape and renne*, seize and plunder, G 1422. *See* Renne.
 Rasour, *s.* razor, B 3246.
 Raughte, *pt. s.* reached, B 1921.
 Raunsoun, *s.* ransom, A 1024.
 Rave, 1 *pr. pl.* we rave, we speak madly, G 959.
 Ravines, *s. pl.* rapines, I 793.
 Ravysedest, 2 *pt. s.* didst ravish, didst draw (down), B 1659; Ravished, *pp.* ravished, overjoyed, F 547.
 Reaume, *s.* realm, kingdom, B 3305.
 Rebekke, *s.* abusive term for an old woman, D 1573.
 Recche, *v.* care, reckon; *recche of it*, care for it, F 71.
 Recchelees, *adj.* careless, indifferent, B 229.
 Receipt, *s.* receipt; *i.e.* recipe for making a mixture, G 1353.
 Receyved, *pp.* accepted (as congenial), acceptable, B 307; Receyven, *v.* to receive, E 1151.
 Reclayne, *v.* to reclaim, as a hawk by a lure, *i.e.* check, H 72.
 Recomandeth, *pr. s. refl.* commends (herself), B 278; *Recomende, ger.* to commend, commit, G 544.
 Reconforte, *v.* to comfort, A 2852.

- Recorde.** 1 *pr. s.* remember, remind, A 829.
Recours. *s.* recourse; *I wol have my recours,* I will return, F 75.
Rede, to read; *Redeth, imp. pl.* read, B 3650; *Rad, pp.* read, G 211.
Rede, adj. as s. red, *i.e.* the blood, B 356; red wine, C 526, 562; *Rede, pl.* red. G 1095.
Redily. *adv.* quickly, C 667.
Redoutinge. *s.* glorifying, A 2050.
Redresse. *v.* to set right, E 431.
Redy, adj. ready, E 299; F 114; dressed, F 387.
Reed, adj. red, B 452.
Reednesse, *s.* redness, G 1097.
Reflexiouns, *s. pl.* reflections by means of mirrors, F 230.
Refuseden, pt. pl. refused, E 123.
Regne, s. kingdom, realm, dominion, reign, B 389, 392, 735; *Regnes, pl.* B 129; governments, B 3954
Regned, pt. s. reigned, B 3845.
Rehersaille, s. enumeration, G 852.
Reioysed, 1 pt. s. refl. I rejoiced, E 145.
Rekne, v. to reckon, account, B 110; *ger.* to reckon, B 158; *Rekenen,* reckon, count, E 2433.
Relees, s. relaxation, ceasing; *out of relees,* without ceasing, G 46.
Relente, v. melt, G 1278.
Relesse, v. to relieve, relax, B 1069; 1 *pr. s.* I release, E 153; *Relessed, pt. s.* forgave, B 3367.
Releved, pp. made rich again, G 872.
Reme, s. realm, B 1306.
Remeveth, imp. pl. 2 p. remove ye, G 1008.
Remewed, pp. removed, F 181.
Ren, s. run, A 4079.
Renably, adv. reasonably, D 1509.
Rending, s. tearing, A 2834
Renegat, s. renegade, apostate, B 932.
Reneye, v. renounce, deny, abjure, B 376.
Renges, s. pl. ranks, A 2594.
Renne. ger. to run; *renneth for,* runs in favor of, B 125; *Ronne, pp.* B 2.
Renne, v. to ransack, plunder; *but only in the phrase* rape and renne, seize and plunder, G 1422. See **Rape**.
Renovellen, pres. pl. renew, I 1027.
Rente, s. rent, *i.e.* revenue, B 3401.
Repaire, v. repair, return, F 589; *Repaireth, pr. s.* returns, F 339; goes, B 3885; *Repeiring, pres. part.* returning, F 608.
Repentaunce, s. penitence, A 1776.
Repentaunt, adj. penitent, B 228.
Replet, adj. full, replete, C 489.
Reportour, s. reporter, A 814.
Reprevable (to), adj. reprehensible, C 632.
Repreve, s. reproof, shame, C 595.
Resalgar, s. realgar, G 814.
Rese, v. shake, A 1985.
Resoun, s. reason, B 3408.
Resounded, pt. s. resounded, F 413.
Respyt, s. respite, delay (of death), G 543.
Reste, s. rest, F 355.
Restelees, adj. restless, C 728.
Retenue, s. retinue, suite, E 270.
Rethor, s. orator, F 38.
Rethoryke, s. rhetoric, E 32.
Retourneth, imp. pl. return, E 809.
Retracciouns, s. pl. recantations, I 1085.
Reule, v. to rule; *reule hir,* guide her conduct, E 327.
Reve, s. steward, bailiff, A 542.
Reve, to bereave, rob of. See **Rafte**.
Revel, s. revelry, E 392.
Revelous, adj. sportive, B 1194.
Reverence, s. reverence, respect, honor, E 196; *thy reverence,* the respect shown to thee, B 116.
Rewe, v. to suffer for, do penance for. G 997;
Rewen, v. to rue, have pity, E 1050.
Rewel-boon, s. (perhaps) rounded bone; or else, rock-crystal, B 2068.
Rewful, adj. sorrowful, sad, B 854.
Rewfulleste, adj. sup. most sorrowful, A 2886.
Rewthe, s. pity, ruth, E 579; a pitiful sight, lit. ruth. E 562.
Reyn, s. rain, B 1864. 3363.
Reysed. ger. to raise. G 861; *Reysed, pp.* made an inroad or military expedition, A 54.
Ribaudye, s. ribaldry, ribald jesting, C 324.
Ribible, s. fiddle, A 4396.
Ribybe, s. old woman, D 1377.
Riche, adj. pl. rich, B 122.
Richely, adv. richly, F 90.
Richesse, s. riches, B 107.
Riden, pp. ridden. B 1990; *pt. pl.* rode, C 968.
Right, adv. precisely. just, exactly, F 193.
Right, s. dat. right; *by right,* by rights, B 44.
Rightwisnesse, s. righteousness, C 637.
Ring, s. ring, concourse; *Ringes, pl.* E 255.
Roche, s. rock, F 500.
Rode, s. complexion, B 1917.
Rody, adj. ruddy, F 385.
Rombel. See **Rumbel**.
Rombled, pt. s. rummaged, fumbled. G 1322.
Rombled, pt. s. made a murmuring noise, rumbled, buzzed, muttered, B 3725.
Romen, v. to roam, B 558.
Ronnen, pt. pl. ran; *Ronne, pp.* run, B 2. See **Renne**.
Rood, pt. s. rode. E 234; *Riden, pp.* B 1990.
Roof, pt. t. of Ryeven.
Roost, s. a roast, A 206.
Rose-reed, adj. red as a rose, G 254.
Roste, v. roast. A 383.
Rote, s. a stringed instrument, A 236.

Rote; an astrological term for the epoch of a nativity, B 314; the radix, the fundamental principle, G 1461; root, source, B 358.
 Rote. *s.* rote; *by rote*, by heart, B 1712.
 Roten. *adj.* rotten, G 17.
 Rouketh. *pr. s.* cowers, huddles, A 1308.
 Rouncy. *s.* hackney, A 390.
 Rounde. *adv.* roundly, fully, melodiously, C 331.
 Rounē. *v.* whisper, B 2025; Rowned, *pt. s.* whispered, F 216.
 Route. *s.* rout, crowd, company, band, B 387, 650, 776.
 Route. *v.* to assemble in a company, B 540.
 Rownen. *v.* to whisper, G 894.
 Rowthe. See Rewthe.
 Rubible. *s.* kind of fiddle, A 3331.
 Rubifying. *s.* rubefaction, reddening, G 797.
 Rude. *adj.* common, rough, poor, E 916.
 Rudeliche. *adv.* rudely, A 734.
 Rudenesse, *s.* rusticity, E 397.
 Ruggy. *adj.* unkempt, rugged, rough, A 2883.
 Rumbel. *s.* moaning wind, A 1979.
 Rum, ram, ruf, nonsense words, to imitate alliteration, I 43.
 Ryden. *pr. pl.* ride, E 784; Rood, *pt. s.* E 234; Riden, *pp.* B 1990.
 Rym. *s.* rime (commonly misspelt *rhyme*), I 44.
 Ryme. *v.* tell in rhyme (*or* rime), put into poetry, B 2122.
 Ryming. *s.* the art of riming, B 48. See Rym.
 Ryotoures, *s. pl.* rioters, roysterers, C 661.
 Rys. *s.* twig, A 3324.
 Ryse. *v.* to arise, get up, F 375; Rysen, *pr. pl.* rise, F 383; Roos, *pt. s.* B 3717.
 Ryve. *v.* rive, pierce, C 828; tear, E 1236.

S.

Sad. *adj.* sedate, fixed, constant, unmoved, settled, E 693; sober, E 220; Sadde, *pl.* discreet, grave, E 1002.
 Sadly. *adv.* in a settled manner, *i. e.* deeply, unstintingly, B 743; firmly, tightly, E 1100.
 Sadnesse, *s.* constancy, patience, E 432.
 Saffron with, to tinge with saffron, to color. C 345.
 Saffroun. *s.* like saffroun, of a bright yellowish color, B 1920.
 Sal armoniak. *s.* sal ammoniac, G 798.
 Sal peter, *s.* saltpetre, G 808.
 Sal preparat, *s.* prepared salt, G 810.
 Sal tartre, *s.* salt of tartar, G 810.
 Salte, *adj. pl.* salt, E 1084.
 Salue, *v.* salute, greet, B 1723; Salewed, *pp.* F 1310.
 Salwes, *s. pl.* willows, D 655.
 Sangwyn, *adj.* red, A 333.
 Sans, *prep.* without, B 501.
 Saphires, *s. pl.* sapphires, B 3658.
 Sapiencie, *s.* wisdom, G 101; *pl.* kinds of intelligence, G 338.
 Sarge, *s.* serge, A 2568.
 Sauf, *adj.* safe, B 343; G 950.
 Sauly. *adv.* certainly, E 870.
 Saule. *s.* soul, A 4187.
 Sautrye. *s.* psaltery, small harp, A 296.
 Save, *prep.* save, except, B 3214.
 Save, *s.* sage (the herb), A 2713.
 Save, *v.* to save, keep, E 683; 3 *imp. s.* may He save, E 505, 1064; Saved, *pp.* kept inviolate, F 531.
 Savour, *s.* smell, G 887; pleasantness, F 404.
 Sawcefleem, *adj.* pimpled, A 625.
 Sawe, *s.* discourse, G 691.
 Scabbe, *s.* scab, a disease of sheep, C 358.
 Scalled, *adj.* scabby, A 627.
 Scaped. *pp.* escaped, B 1151.
 Scarsetee, *s.* scarcity, G 1393.
 Scarsly. *adv.* scarcely, B 3602.
 Scattered, *pp.* scattered, G 914.
 Scathe, *s.* scathe, harm, pity, E 1172.
 Science, *s.* learning, learned writing, B 1666.
 Sclaundre, *s.* ill fame, E 722.
 Slendre. *adj. pl.* slender, E 1198.
 Scole, *s.* school, B 1685, 1694.
 Scoleward; *to scoleward*, toward school, B 1739.
 Scoleye, *ger.* to study, A 302.
 Scourges. *s. pl.* scourges, whips, plagues, E 1157.
 Seche. *ger.* to seek, A 784.
 Secree. *s.* a secret, B 3211; *secree of secrees*, secret of secrets, Lat. Secreta Secretorum (the name of a book), G 1447.
 Secreenesse. *s.* secrecy, B 773.
 Secrely. *adv.* secretly, E 763.
 Secte, *s.* sect, company, E 1171; religion, faith (lit. following), F 17.
 See. *s.* seat of empire, B 3339.
 See. *ger.* to see, look on; Sey, *pl. s.* saw, B 1, 7; Seyn, *pp.* seen, B 1863; See, 3 *imp. s.* may (He) behold, *or* protect, B 156.
 Seel, *s.* happiness, A 4239; seal, B 882.
 Seen, *v.* see, B 182.
 Seeth, *pt. s.* seethed, boiled, E 227.
 Seint, *s.* saint, B 1631; Seintes. *gen. pl.* B 61.
 Seintuarie, *s.* sanctuary, I 781.
 Seistow, sayest thou, B 110.
 Seke. *v.* search through, B 60; Seken, *ger.* to seek, *i. e.* a matter for search, G 874.
 Selde, *adj. pl.* seldom, few; *selde tyme*, few times, E 146.
 Selde. *adv.* seldom, E 427.
 Seled, *pp.* sealed, B 736.

- Selle, *v.* give, sell, A 278.
- Selve, *adj.* very; *thy selve neighbour*, thy very neighbor, B 115.
- Sely, good, innocent, B 1702; holy, B 682; innocent, C 292; silly, simple, G 1076.
- Semblable, *adj.* like, I 408.
- Semblant, *s.* outward show, semblance, E 928.
- Seme, *v.* seem, appear, F 102; Semed, *pt. s. impers.* it seemed, E 396; *him semed*, it appeared to them, they supposed, F 56; *the peple semed*, it seemed to the people, the people supposed, F 201.
- Semely, *adj.* seemly, comely, B 1919.
- Semicope, *s.* a short cope, A 262.
- Seminge, *s.* appearance; *to my seminge*, as it appears to me, B 1838.
- Semisoun, *s.* low noise, A 3697.
- Sencer, *s.* censer, A 3340.
- Sendal, *s.* a thin silk, A 440.
- Sendeth, 2 *imp. pl.* send ye, C 614; Sente, *pt. s. subj.* would send, B 1091.
- Sene, *adj.* apparent, F 645.
- Sentence, *s.* opinion, B 113, 3992; meaning, subject, result, B 1753; judgment, order, I 17; verdict, G 366; general meaning, I 58.
- Septemtrioun, *s.* north, B 3657.
- Sepulture, *s.* sepulchre, C 558.
- Sergeant, *s.* sergeant, officer, E 519.
- Sermone, *ger.* to preach, speak, C 879.
- Sermouns, *s. pl.* writings, B 87.
- Servage, *s.* servitude, thraldom, bondage, A 1946; B 368.
- Servisable, *adj.* serviceable, useful, E 979.
- Servitude, *s.* servitude, E 798.
- Servyse, *s.* service, serving, E 603.
- Sesoun, *s.* season, G 1343.
- Set, *pp.* placed, put, B 440; Seten, *pt. pl. sat*, B 3734; *sette hir*, sat, B 329; *sette her on knees*, cast herself on her knees, B 638; *sette hem*, seated themselves, C 775; *setten hem adoun*, set themselves, G 396.
- Setewale. See Cetewale.
- Sethe, *v.* boil, seethe, A 383.
- Serture, *s.* security, surety, B 243.
- Sewed, *pt. s.* pursued, B 4527.
- Sewes, *s. pl.* lit. juices, gravies; prob. used here for seasoned dishes, delicacies, F 67.
- Sexteyn, *s.* sacristan, B 3126.
- Seyl, *s.* sail, A 696.
- Seyn, *v.* say; Seyd, *pp.* B 49; Seydestow, saidst thou, G 334.
- Seyn, *pp.* seen, B 1863.
- Seynd, *pp.* singed, broiled, B 4035.
- Shadde, *pt. s.* shed, poured, B 3921.
- Shadwe, *s.* shadow, B 7, 10.
- Shal, 1 *pr. s.* I shall (do so), F 688; Shaltow, shalt thou, A 3575; Shul, 1 *pr. pl.* we must, E 38.
- Shamefast, *adj.* modest, shy; Shamfast, A 2055; C 55.
- Shames; *shames deth*, death of shame, *i.e.* shameful death, B 819.
- Shamfastnesse, *s.* modesty, A 840.
- Shap, *s.* shape, form, G 44.
- Shape, *v.* planned, E 275; prepared, B 249; appointed, B 253; Shapen hem, *pr. pl.* dispose themselves, intend, F 214.
- Sharpe, *adv.* sharply, B 2073.
- Shaving, *s.* a thin slice, G 1239.
- Shedde, *pt. s.* shed, B 3447.
- Sheeldes, *s. pl.* French crowns, A 278.
- Shefe, *s.* sheaf; Sheef, A 104.
- Sheld, *s.* shield, A 2122.
- Shendeth, *pr. s.* ruins, confounds, B 28.
- Shendshipe, *s.* ignominy, I 273.
- Shene, *adj.* showy, fair, B 692; bright, F 53.
- Shepne, *s. pl.* sheep-folds, A 2000.
- Shere, *v.* to shear, cut, B 3257.
- Shere, *s.* shear, a cutting instrument, scissors, B 3246.
- Sherte, *s.* shirt, B 2049.
- Shet, *pp.* shut, A 2597.
- Shete, *s.* sheet, G 879.
- Shethe, *s.* sheath, B 2066.
- Shetten, *v.* to shut, enclose; *gonne shetten*, did enclose, G 517.
- Shifte, *v.* to apportion, assign, G 278.
- Shilde, 3 *imp. s.* may He shield, may He defend, B 2098.
- Shine, *s.* shin, leg, A 386.
- Shipman, *s.* shipman, skipper, B 1179.
- Shipnes, *s. pl.* stables, D 871.
- Shirreve, *s.* governor (reeve) of a shire or county, A 359.
- Shiten, *pp.* befouled, A 504.
- Sho, *s.* shoe, A 253.
- Shode, *s.* the temple (of the head), A 2007.
- Sholde, 1 *pt. s.* should, B 56; *pt. s.* would, B 3627; had to, was to, G 1382; I 65.
- Shonde, *s.* shame, disgrace, B 2058.
- Shoon, *pt. s.* shone, B 11. *Pt. t. of* Shynen.
- Shoop, *pt. s.* plotted, lit. shaped, B 3543; prepared for, E 198; created, E 903; contrived, E 946.
- Shot-windowe, *s.* window with a bolt, A 3358.
- Showing, *s.* shoving, pushing, H 53.
- Shredde, *pt. s.* shred, cut, E 227.
- Shrewe, *s.* a shrew, peevish woman, E 1222, 2428; evil one, G 917; an ill-tempered (male) person, C 496; Shrewes, *pl.* wicked men, rascals, C 835.
- Shrewe, *adj.* evil, wicked, G 995.
- Shrighte, *pt. s.* shrieked, F 417.
- Shullen, 2 *pr. pl.* I ye shall, G 241; Shulde, 1 *pt. s.* I should, I ought to, B 247.
- Sicer, *s.* strong drink, B 3245.

- Sik**, *adj.* sick, A 1600.
Siker, *adj.* certain, G 1047; safe, G 864.
Sikerly, *adv.* certainly, assuredly, surely, B 3984.
Sikirnesse, *s.* security, safety, B 425.
Sikly, *adv.* ill, with ill will, E 625.
Similitude, *s.* comparison; *hence*, proposition, statement, G 431.
Simphonye, *s.* an instrument of music, B 2005.
Sin, *conj.* since, B 56; E 448.
Singuler, *adj.* a single, G 997.
Sinwes, *s. pl.* sinews, I 690.
Sir, *s.* sir, a title of respectful address; *sir* man of lawe, B 33; *sir* parish prest, B 1166; *sir* gentil maister, B 1627.
Sis cink, *i. e.* six-five or eleven, a throw with two dice, which often proved a winning one in the game of "hazard," B 125.
Site, *s.* site, situation, E 199.
Sith, *adv.* afterwards, C 869.
Sithen, *adv.* since, afterwards, B 58.
Sitthe, *conj.* since, B 3867.
Sive, *s.* sieve, G 940.
Skile, *s.* reason; *gret skile*, good reason, E 1152; Skiles, *pl.* reasons, reasonings, arguments, F 205.
Skilful, *adj.* discerning, B 1038.
Skilfully, *adv.* reasonably, with good reason, G 320.
Slake, *v.* to slacken, desist from, E 705; to cease, E 137; to end, E 802; Slaketh, *pr. s.* assuages, E 1107.
Slawe, *pp.* slain, B 2016; Slawen *pp.* E 544; Slayn, *pp.* B 3708; Sleen, *v.* to slay, B 3736; *ger.* E 1076; Sleeth, *pr. s.* slays, E 628; Slow, *pt. s.* slew, B 3212; extinguished, B 3922.
Sleere, *s.* slayer, A 2005.
Sleighte, *s.* contrivance, E 1102; craft, skill, G 867; Sleightes, *pl.* tricks, E 2421; devices, G 773.
Slen, *v.* to slay, B 3531.
Slepe, *s.* sleep, F 347.
Slepen, *v.* to sleep, B 2100; Slepte, *pt. s.* slept, E 224.
Slepy, *adj.* causing sleep, A 1387.
Slewthe. See **Slouthe**.
Slit, short for slideth. See **Slyde**.
Slogardye, *s.* sloth, sluggishness, G 17.
Slough, *s.* mud, mire, H 64.
Slouthe, *s.* sloth, B 530.
Sluttish, *adj.* slovenly, G 636.
Slyde, *v.* pass, go away, E 82. See **Slit**.
Slyding, *adj.* unstable, slippery, G 732.
Slye, *adj.* artfully contrived, F 230.
Slyk, *adj.* sleek, D 351.
Slyk, *adj.* such, A 4130.
Slyly, *adv.* prudently, wisely, A 1444.
Smal, *adj.* little, B 1726; *Smale*, *adj. pl.* E 380.
Smal, *adv.*; *but smal*, but little, F 71.
Smart, *adj.* brisk (said of a fire), G 768.
Smerte, *v.* to smart, to feel grieved, E 353; *pt. s. subj. impers.* grieved, T 564; *1 pr. pl. subj.* may smart, may suffer, G 871. Short for *smerteth*.
Smerte, *s.* smart, dolor, F 480.
Smerte, *adv.* smartly, sorely, E 629.
Smit, *pr. s.* smites, E 122; Smoot, *pt. s.* smote, struck, B 669. See **Smyte**.
Smok, *s.* smock, E 890.
Smoking, *pres. pt.* perfuming, A 2281.
Smoklees, *adj.* without a smock, E 875.
Smoot, *pt. s.* of **Smyte**.
Smoterlich, *adj.* smutty, A 3963.
Smyte, *2 pr. pl.* ye smite, F 157. See **Smit**.
Snewed, *pt. s.* snowed, abounded, A 345.
Snibbed, *pp.* snubbed, reprov'd, F 688.
Snow, *s.* snow; *i. e.* argent in heraldry, white, B 3573.
Sobre, *adj.* sober, sedate, B 97.
Sodeyn, *adj.* sudden, B 421.
Sodeynliche, *adv.* suddenly, A 1575.
Sodeynly, *adv.* suddenly, B 15.
Softe, *adv.* softly, E 583; tenderly, B 275.
Softe, *adj.* gentle, slow, B 399.
Softely, *adv.* softly, F 636; quietly, G 408.
Soken, *s.* toll, A 3987.
Sokingly, *adv.* gently, B 2766.
Sol, Sol (the sun), G 826.
Solas, *s.* rest, relief, B 1972; diversion, B 1904; comfort, solace, pleasure, B 3964.
Solempne, *adj.* magnificent, illustrious, B 387; grand, festive, E 1125; superb, F 61; illustrious, F 111.
Solempnely, *adv.* with pomp, with state, B 317.
Solempnitee, *s.* feast, festivity, A 870.
Som, *indef. pron.* some, B 1182; one, a certain man, G 922; *som shreve is*, some one (at least) is wicked, G 995.
Somdel, *adv.* partially, lit. some deal, E 1012
Someres, *s. gen.* summer's, B 554.
Somme, *s.* sum, chief point; *Sommes*, *pl.* G 675.
Somme, *v.* summon, D 1377
Somnour, *s.* an officer employed to summon delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts, apparitor, A 543.
Somtyme, *adv.* at some time, some day, at a future time, B 110.
Sond, *s.* sand, B 509.
Sonde, *s.* sending, message, B 388, 1049; dispensation of providence, visitation, B 760, 826; trial, B 902; message (*or* messenger), G 525.
Sone, *s.* son, F 688; *Sones*, *pl.* F 29.
Sone, *adv.* soon, B 769.
Sone-in-law, *s.* son-in-law, E 315.
Sonest, *adv. superl.* soonest, B 3716.
Sonne, *s.* sun, G 52; *Sonne*, *gen.* sun's, B 3944.

- Soor, *adj.* sore, F 1571.
 Sooth, *s.* truth, B 3971; Sothe. *dat.* B 1939.
 Sooth, *adj.* true; *used as adv.* truly, C 636.
 Soothfastnesse, *s.* truth, E 796.
 Soothly, *adv.* verily, E 689.
 Soper, *s.* supper, F 290.
 Sophyme, *s.* a sophism, trick of logic, E 5.
 Sore, *ger.* to soar, mount aloft, F 123.
 Sore, *s.* sore, misery, E 1243.
 Sore, *adv.* sorely; *bar so sore*, bore so ill, E 85.
 Sorwe, *s.* sorrow, grief, sympathy, compassion, F 422.
 Sorwefully, *adv.* sorrowfully, F 585.
 Sory, *adj.* sad, unfortunate, B 1949; ill, C 876; miserable, H 55.
 Sote, *adj.* sweet, A 1; F 389.
 Soth, *adj.* true, B 169. See Sooth.
 Sothe. See Sooth.
 Sother, *adj. comp.* truer, G 214.
 Sothfastnesse, *s.* truth, B 2365.
 Sotil, *adj.* thin, subtle, A 2030.
 Sotted, *adj.* besotted, befooled, G 1341.
 Souded, *pp.* attached, devoted, B 1769.
 Souked, *pp.* sucked, been at the breast, E 450; Soukinge, *pres. part.* sucking, B 1648.
 Soun, *s.* sound, musical sound, E 271.
 Soune, *v.* sound; imitate in sound, speak like, F 105; Souneth, *pr. s.* tends (to), is consonant (with), B 3157.
 Soupem, *pr. pl. sup.* F 297.
 Souple, *adj.* subtle, obedient, yielding, B 3690.
 Sourden, *pres. pl.* rise from. I 448.
 Sours, *s.* source, origin, E 49.
 Souter, *s.* cobbler, A 3904.
 Sowdan, *s.* sultan, B 177.
 Sowdanesse, *s.* sultaness, B 358.
 Sowen, *v.* to sow, B 1182.
 Sowled, *pp.* endowed with a soul, G 329.
 Sownen, *pr. pl.* sound, *i.e.* play, F 270; Sowneth, *pr. pl.* tend (to), are consonant (with), F 517; Sounded, *pt. pl.* tended, B 3348. See Soune.
 Space, *s.* opportunity, I 64.
 Spare, *v.* to refrain, abstain from, A 192.
 Sparre, *s.* bar, bolt, A 990.
 Sparwe, *s.* sparrow, A 626.
 Spece, *s.* species, kind, class, I 407.
 Speche, *s. dat.* speech, elocution, oratory, F 104.
 Special, *adj.*; *in special.* specially, A 444.
 Spedde, *pt. s.* prospered, made to prosper, B 3876.
 Speedful, *adj.* advantageous, B 727.
 Speke, *v.* speak; Spak, *pt. s.* E 295.
 Spekestow, *s.* speakest thou, G 473.
 Spelle, *s. dat.* a spell, relation, story, B 2083.
 Spence, *s.* a battery, D 1031.
 Spending-silver, *s.* silver to spend, money in hand, G 1018.
 Spere, *s.* sphere, F 1280.
 Spicerye, *s.* mixture of spices, B 2043.
 Spiilt, *pp.* killed, B 857.
 Spirites, *s. pl.* the (four) spirits in alchemy, G 820.
 Spitously, *adv.* angrily, A 3476.
 Spones, *pl.* spoons, C 908.
 Spores, *pl.* spurs, A 473.
 Spousaille, *s.* espousal, wedding, E 180.
 Spoused, *pp.* espoused, wedded, E 3, 386.
 Spouted, *pp.* vomited, B 487.
 Spradde, *pt. s.* spread, E 418.
 Spreynd, *pp.* sprinkled, B 1830. See Springen.
 Springe, *v.* rise, dawn, F 346.
 Springen, *v.* sprinkle, scatter, sow broadcast, B 1183; Spreynd, *pp.* sprinkled, B 1830.
 Springing, *s.* beginning, source, E 49.
 Spurne, *v.* spurn, kick, F 616.
 Spyces, *s. pl.* spices, F 291.
 Squames, *s. pl.* scales, G 759.
 Squaymous, *adj.* squeamish, A 3337.
 Squyer, *s.* squire, A 79; Squyeres, *pl.* E 192.
 Stable, *adj.* constant, E 931.
 Stablised, *pp.* established, A 2995.
 Staf-slinge, *s.* a staff-sling, B 2019.
 Stalke, *v.*; Stalked him, *pt. s.* walked slowly, E 525.
 Stampe, *pr. pl.* stamp, bray in a mortar, C 538.
 Stank, *s.* a pool, I 841.
 Stant, *pr. s.* is, B 3116.
 Stape, Stapen, *pp.* advanced, B 4011.
 Starf, *pt. s.* died, B 283. *Pt. t. of Sterven.* See Sterve.
 Starke, *adj. pl.* severe, B 3560.
 Stede, *s.* steed, F 81.
 Stede; *in stede of*, in stead of, B 3308.
 Stedfastnesse, *s.* steadfastness, firmness, E 699.
 Stedfastly, *adv.* assuredly, E 1094.
 Steer, *s.* a yearling bullock, A 2149.
 Stele, *s.* handle, A 3785.
 Stele, *v.* to steal, B 105; Steleth, *pr. s.* steals away, B 21; Stal, *pt. s.* stole away, B 3763.
 Stemed, *pt. s.* shone, A 202.
 Stente, *v.* to cease, stint, leave off, B 3925.
 Stepe, *adj. pl.* bright, glittering, A 201.
 Stere, *s.* pilot, helmsman, B 448.
 Sterelees, *adj.* rudderless, B 439.
 Sterlinges, *pl.* sterling coins, C 907.
 Sterres, *gen. pl.* of the stars, E 1124.
 Sterte, *v.* pass away, B 335; *pr. pl.* start, rise quickly, C 705.
 Sterve, *v.* die of famine, C 451; Starf, *pt. s.* died, B 3325.
 Stevene, *s.* voice, language, F 150.
 Stewe, *s.* a fish-pond, A 350.
 Stiborn, *adj.* stubborn, D 456.
 Stiked, *pt. s.* stuck, fixed, B 2097; Stikede,

- pierced, B 3897; Stiked, *pp.* stabbed, B 430; *a stiked swyn*, a stuck pig, C 556.
- Stillatorie, *s.* still, vessel used in distillation, G 580.
- Stire, *v.* to stir, move, C 346.
- Stiropes, *s. pl.* stirrups, B 1163.
- Stith, *s.* anvil, A 2026.
- Stoke, *v.* stab, A 2546.
- Stonde, *v.* stand; be understood, be fixed, E 346; be set in view (as a prize at a game), B 1931; Stode, stood, B 176.
- Stongen, *pp.* stung, A 1079.
- Stoor, *s.* store, farm-stock, C 365.
- Stopen, *pp.* advanced, E 1514.
- Store, *adj.* stubborn, E 2367.
- Storie, *s.* tale, history, B 3900.
- Stot, *s.* stallion, A 615.
- Stounde, *s.* short time, B 1021.
- Stoupe, *ger.* to stoop, G 1311.
- Stoures, *s. pl.* battles, combats, B 3560.
- Stout, *adj.* strong, A 545.
- Strange, *def. adj.* strange, F 89.
- Straughte, *pt. s.* stretched, A 2916.
- Straunge, *adj.* strange, foreign, A 13.
- Straw, *interj.* a straw! F 695.
- Strawe, *2 pr. s. subj.* strew, F 613.
- Strayte, *s.* strait, B 464.
- Stream, *s.* stream, river, A 464.
- Streen, *s.* strain, *i.e.* stock, progeny, race, E 157.
- Streit, *adj.* narrow, A 174.
- Streite, *pp. as adj. def.* drawn, B 4547.
- Stremes, *pl.* streams, rays, beams, B 3944.
- Strenger, *adj. comp.* stronger, B 3711.
- Strengthes, *pl.* sources of strength, B 3248.
- Strepth, *pr. s.* strips, E 894; Strepn, *pl.* E 1116.
- Streyne, *v.* constrain, E 144.
- Strike, *s.* hank (of flax), A 676.
- Strogelest, *2 pr. s.* strugglest, C 829.
- Stronde, *s.* shore, B 825.
- Stroof, *pt. s.* strove, A 1038.
- Strook, *s.* a stroke, B 3899.
- Strouted, *pt. s.* spread, A 3315.
- Stryve, *v.* to strive, oppose, E 170.
- Stubbes, *s. pl.* stumps, A 1978.
- Studien, *v.* to study, E 8; Studie, *2 pr. pl.* E 5.
- Sturdinesse, *s.* sternness, E 700.
- Sturdy, *adj.* cruel, stern, E 698, 1049.
- Style, *s.* stile, gate to climb over, C 712; F 106.
- Style, *s.* style, mode of writing, E 18, 41.
- Styves, *s. pl.* stews, brothels, D 1332.
- Styward, *s.* steward, B 914.
- Subgets, *s. pl.* subjects, E 482.
- Subieccioun, *s.* subjection, obedience, B 270; subjection, governance, B 3656.
- Sublymatories, *s. pl.* vessels for sublimation, G 793.
- Sublymed, *pp.* sublimed, sublimated, G 774.
- Sublyming, *s.* sublimation, G 770.
- Submitted; *ye ben submitted*, ye have submitted, B 35.
- Subtilly, *adv.* subtly, F 222.
- Subtiltee, *s.* skill, craft, G 844; Subtiltee, subtilty, craft, secret knowledge, G 620.
- Suffisant, *adj.* able, sufficient, B 243.
- Suffraunce, *s.* endurance, patience, E 1162.
- Suffyse, *v.* suffice, B 3648.
- Suggestioun, *s.* a criminal charge, B 3607.
- Sugre, *s.* sugar, B 2046.
- Superfluitee, *s.* superfluity, excess, C 471.
- Surcote, *s.* upper coat, A 617.
- Surement, *s.* surety, pledge, F 1534.
- Surplys, *s.* surplice, G 558.
- Surquidrie, *s.* arrogance, over-confidence, I 403.
- Sursanure, *s.* surface-healed wound, F 1113.
- Suspecious, *adj.* suspicious, ominous of evil, E 541.
- Suspect, *s.* suspicion, E 905.
- Sustenance, *s.* support, living, E 202.
- Swa, *adv.* so, A 4040.
- Swal, *pt. s.* swelled; *up swal*, swelled up, was puffed up with anger, B 1750; Swollen, *pp.* proud, E 950.
- Swappe, *v.* to swap, strike, E 586; Swapte, *pt. s.* fell suddenly, E 1099; Swap, *imp. s.* strike off, G 366.
- Swatte, *pt. s.* sweated, G 560.
- Swayn, *s.* lad, young man, B 1914.
- Sweigh, *s.* sway, motion, B 296.
- Swelwe, *pr. s. subj.* swallow, E 1188.
- Swerd, *s. dat.* sword, B 64.
- Swere, *v.* swear, B 1171; Swoor, *pt. s.* B 2062; Sworen, *pl.* E 176; Swore, *pp.* sworn, E 403; Sworn, bound by oath, F 18.
- Swering, *s.* swearing, C 631.
- Swete, *adj.* sweet, H 42.
- Swete, *ger.* to sweat, G 522; Swatte, *pt. s.* G 560.
- Sweven, *s.* dream, B 3930.
- Swich, *adj.* such; *swich a*, such a, B 3921; *swich oon*, such an one, F 231; Swiche, *pl.* B 88.
- Swink, *s.* labor, toil, A 188; G 730.
- Swinke, *v.* labor, toil, A 186; G 669; *ger.* labor, toil, C 874; *pr. pl.* gain by labor, work for, G 21; Swonken, *pp.* toiled, A 4235.
- Swinker, *s.* laborer, A 531.
- Swollen, *pp.* swollen, *i.e.* proud, E 950.
- Swolwe, *v.* to swallow, H 36.
- Swonken. See Swinke.
- Swoot, *s.* sweat, G 578.
- Swote, *adj.* See Sote, Swete.
- Swowneth, *pr. s.* swoons, F 430; Swowned, *pt. s.* swooned, F 443; Swowning, *pres. part.* B 181.

Swowninge, *s.* swooning, swoon, E 1080.
Swyn, *s.* swine, A 598.
Swythe, *adv.* quickly; *as swythe*, as quickly as possible, B 637; G 936.
Swyve, *v.* have sexual intercourse with, A 4178.
Sy, *pt. s.* saw, G 1381.
Sye, **Seyen**, *pt. pl.* saw, E 1804; G 110.
Syk, *s.* sigh, F 498.
Syked, *pt. s.* sighed, B 3394; **Syket**, *pr. s.* sigheth, sighs, B 985; **Sight**, *pt. s.* sighed, B 1035.
Sys, six, B 3851.
Sythe, *pl.* times, B 733; *ofte sythe*, many times, G 1031; *ful ofte sythe*, full oftentimes, E 233.

T.

T', before a verb beginning with a vowel, to; *as* Tacord, etc.
Taa, *v.* take, A 4129.
Tabard, *s.* short coat for a herald, A 20; for a laborer, A 541.
Table, *s.* board; *at table*, at board, *i.e.* entertained as a lodger, G 1015.
Tabyde, *for* To abide, B 797.
Tacord, *for* To accord, *i.e.* to agreement, H 98.
Taffata, *s.* fine silk, A 440.
Taffraye, *for* To affraye, to frighten, E 455.
Taillages, *s. pl.* taxes, I 567.
Taille, *s.* a tally, credit, A 570.
Tak, *imp. s.* receive, B 117; **Take me**, 1 *pr. s.* offer myself, betake myself, B 1985; **Takestow**, 2 *pr. s.* takest thou, G 435.
Takel, *s.* tackle, arrow, A 106.
Tale, *s.* a long story, E 383; **Tales**, *pl.* B 130.
Talent, *s.* desire, appetite, C 540.
Talighte, *for* To alighte, *i.e.* to alight, E 909.
Taling, *s.* story-telling, B 1624.
Tamende, *for* To amende, to redress, E 441.
Tanoyen, *for* To anoyen, to injure, B 492.
Tapicer, *s.* upholsterer, A 362.
Tappestere, *s.* barmaid, tapster, A 241.
Tarien, *v.* tarry, B 983; **delay** (used actively), F 73; **Taried**, *pp.* delayed, F 402.
Tarraye, *for* To arraye, to array, arrange, E 961.
Tartre, *s.* tartar, G 813.
Tas, *s.* heap, A 1005.
Tassaile, *for* To assaile, *ger.* to assail; **Tassaile**, E 1180.
Tassaye, *for* To assaye, to try; to test, prove, try, E 454, 1075.
Tassoille, *for* To assoile, to absolve, C 933.
Taste, *imp. s.* feel, G 503.
Taverner, *s.* inn-keeper, C 685.
Tavyse, *for* To tavyse, to deliberate, B 1426.
Teche, *v.* teach, A 308; B 1180.
Teer, *s.* a tear, E 1104; **Teres**, *pl.* E 1084.

Tellen, *v.* tell, relate, B 56; **Tel**, *imp. s.* B 1167.
Tembrace, *for* To embrace, E 1101.
Temple, *s.* inn of court, A 567.
Tempred, *pp.* tempered, G 926.
Temps, *s.* tense; *fatur temps*, future tense, futurity, time to come, G 875.
Tenbrace, *for* To embrace, to embrace, B 1891.
Tendure, *for* To endure, E 756, 811.
Tenspyre, *for* To enspyre, *i.e.* to inspire, G 1470.
Tentilly, *adv.* attentively, E 334.
Tercelet, *s.* male falcon, F 504, 621; **Tercelets**, *pl.* male birds of prey, F 648.
Tere, *s.* a tear, B 3852.
Terme, *s.* period, space of time; *in terme*, in set terms or phrases, C 311; *terme of his lyve*, for the whole period of his life, G 1479; **Termes**, *pl.* set terms, pedantic expressions, G 1398.
Terved, *pp.* stripped, G 1171.
Tespye, *for* To espye, to espy, B 1989.
Testers, *s. pl.* head-pieces, A 2499.
Testes, *s. pl.* vessels for assaying metals, G 818.
Testif, *adj.* headstrong, A 4004.
Texpounden, *for* To expounden, *i.e.* to expound, to explain, B 1716.
Text, *s.* text, quotation from an author, B 45.
Textuel, *adj.* literal, keeping strictly to the letter of the text, I 57.
Teyd, *pp.* tied, bound, E 2432.
Teyne, *s.* a thin plate of metal, G 1225, 1229.
Th', before substantives beginning with a vowel, *the*; *as* Theffect *for* the effect.
Thadversitee, *s.* the adversity, E 756.
Thakked, *pp.* stroked, A 3304.
Thalighte, *for* Thee alighte; *in thee alighte*, alighted in thee, B 1660.
Than, *adv.*; *er than*, sooner than, before, G 899.
Thanke, 1 *pr. s.* I thank, E 1088.
Tharray, *for* The array, F 63.
That, *conj.* as, as well as, B 1036; *rel. pron.* with reference to whom, G 236.
Thavys, *s.* the advice, A 3076.
The, *pron.* thee, F 676.
Thee, *v.* prosper, thrive, G 641; *also note* I *thee*, so may I thrive, B 2007.
Theffect, *for* The effect; the moral, B 2148.
Thegle, *for* The egle, the eagle, B 3573.
Theme, *s.* text, thesis of a sermon, C 333.
Themperour, *for* The emperour, the emperor, B 248; **Themperoures**, the emperor's, B 151.
Thenche, *v.* think, A 3253.
Thende, *for* The ende, the end, B 423, 3269.
Thenke, 1 *pr. s.* I think, I intend, E 641.
Thennes, *adv.* thence, B 308; *used as s.* the place that, G 66.
Thennes-forth, *adv.* thenceforth, B 1755.
Thentencioun, the intention, G 1443.

- Thentente**, *for* The entente, purpose, end, G 1306.
- Ther**, *adv.* there, B 62; *ther that*, where, F 267.
- Ther-about**, *adv.* thereupon, therein, G 832.
- Ther-bifore**, *adv.* beforehand, E 689, 729.
- Ther-biforn**, *adv.* beforehand, before the event, B 197; C 624.
- Ther-fore**, *adv.* on that account, E 445; on that point, E 1141; for that purpose, F 177.
- Ther-inne**, *adv.* therein, in it, B 1945, 3573.
- Ther-of**, *adv.* with respect to that, to that end, E 644.
- Ther-on**, *adv.* thereupon, thereof, F 3.
- Ther-oute**, *adv.* out there, out in the open air, B 3362; outside there, G 1136.
- Therto**, *adv.* besides, moreover, F 19.
- Therwith**, *adv.* besides, at the same time, B 3210.
- Therwith al**, *adv.* besides all that, as well, B 3131, 3612.
- Thestaat**, *for* The estaat, the state, condition, B 128.
- Thewes**, *pl.* qualities, E 409; virtues, good qualities, G 101.
- Thexcellent**, the excellent, B 150.
- Thider**, *adv.* thither, B 144; C 749.
- Thikke**, *adj.* thick, F 159.
- Thilke**, that very, that same, C 753; that sort of, I 50.
- Thimage**, the image, B 1695.
- Thing**, *pl.* possessions, G 540; Things, pieces of music, F 78.
- Thingot**, the ingot, G 1233.
- Thinketh**, *pr. s. impers.*; *me thinketh*, it seems to me, B 1901.
- Thinne**, *adj.* thin, poor, scanty, limited, G 741.
- Thise**, *pl. of* This, *but a monosyllable*, B 59.
- Thoccident**, *for* The Occident, B 3864.
- Thoght**, *s.* care, anxiety, B 1779; E 80.
- Tholed**, *pp.* suffered, D 1546.
- Thombe**, *s.* thumb, F 83, 148.
- Thonder**, *s.* thunder, F 258.
- Thonke**, 1 *pr. s.* I thank, E 830.
- Thorient**, *for* The Orient, B 3871, 3883.
- Thoughte**, *pt. s. impers.* seemed, B 146; *thoughte hem*, it seemed to them, C 475.
- Thral**, *s.* thrall, slave, servant, B 3343.
- Thraldom**, *s.* bondage, slavery, B 286.
- Threpe**, 1 *pr. pl.* we call, assert to be, G 826.
- Threshold**, *s.* threshold, E 288, 291.
- Threste**, *v.* thrust, A 2612.
- Threting**, *s.* threatening, menace, G 698.
- Thrift**, *s.* success, prosperity in money-making, G 739, 1425.
- Thriftly**, *adj.* profitable, B 1165.
- Thrittene**, thirteen, D 2259.
- Throf**, *pt. s. of* Thryve.
- Throp**, *s.* thorp, small village, E 199; Thropes, *s. gen.* village's, I 12.
- Throwe**, *s.* a short space of time, a little while, B 953; E 450.
- Thrustel**, *s.* a throstle, thrush, B 1963; Thrustel-cok, B 1959.
- Thryve**, *v.* thrive, prosper, E 172.
- Thurgh**, *prep.* through, by help of, B 1669; by, F 11.
- Thurgh-girt**, *pp.* pierced through, A 1010.
- Thurghout**, *prep.* throughout, F 46; all through, B 256, 464; quite through, C 655.
- Thurrok**, *s.* hold of a ship, sink, I 363, 715.
- Thurst**, *s.* thirst, B 100.
- Thursted him**, *pt. s. impers.* he was thirsty, B 3229.
- Thwitel**, *s.* knife, A 3933.
- Tid**, *pp. of* Tyden.
- Tidifs**, *s. pl.* small birds, F 648.
- Tikel**, *adj.* frail, A 3428.
- Til**, *prep.* to, G 306.
- Tirannye**, *s.* tyranny, B 165.
- To**, *adv.* too, B 2129; overmuch, G 1423; *to dere*, too dearly, C 293; *to and fro*, all ways, H 53.
- To**, *prep.* to (used after its case), G 1449.
- To**, *s.* toe, A 2726.
- To-bete**, *v.* beat severely, G 405.
- To-breke**, *pr. s.* breaks in twain, G 907.
- Tode**, *s.* toad, I 636.
- Toght**, *adj.* taut, D 2267.
- To-gider**, *adv.* together, B 3222; Togidres, C 702.
- To-hewe**, *pp.* hewn in pieces, B 430.
- Tokening**, *s.* token, proof, G 1153.
- Tolde**, *pt. t. of* Tellen.
- Tollen**, *v.* take toll, A 562.
- Tombesteres**, *s. pl. fem.* dancing girls, lit. female tumblers, C 477.
- Tonges**, *pl.* languages, B 3497.
- Tonne-greet**, *adj.* great as a tun, A 1994.
- Took**, *pt. s.* took, had, B 192.
- To-race**, *pr. pl. subj.* may scratch to pieces, E 572.
- Tord**, *s.* excrement, C 955.
- To-rent**, *pp.* torn to pieces, E 1012; *To-rente*, *pt. s.* rent in twain, B 3215.
- Torets**, *pl.* small rings or swivels, A 2152.
- Tormentinge**, *s.* torture, E 1038.
- Tormentour**, *s.* tormentor, *i. e.* executioner, B 818.
- Tormentyse**, *s.* torment, B 3707.
- Torn**, *s.* turn, C 815.
- Torne**, *v.* to turn, G 1403; Terve, 3 *imp. s.* may he turn, G 1274; Terved, *pp.* turned, *i. e.* "turned him round his finger," G 1171.
- Tortuous**, *adj.* oblique, a technical term in astrology, used of the six of the zodiacal signs which ascend most obliquely, B 302.
- To-swinke**, *pr. pl.* labor greatly, C 519.

To-tar, *pt. s.* lacerated, B 380r.
To-tere, *pr. pl.* rend, tear in pieces, C 474; **To-tore**, *fp.* torn in pieces, G 635.
Toty, *adj.* dizzy, A 4253.
Touche, *pr. s. subj.* affect, concern, B 3284.
Tour, *s.* tower; in B 2096, it means that his crest was a miniature tower, with a lily projecting from it.
Touret, *s.* turret, A 1909.
Tournament, *s.* a tournament, B 1906.
Toute, *s.* backside, A 3812.
Toverbyde, *to* outlive, D 1260.
Towaille, *s.* towel, B 3935, 3943.
Trad, *pt. s.* trod, B 4308.
Traiterye, *s.* traitorye, B 781.
Trappures, *pl.* trappings of a horse, A 2499.
Trave, *s.* frame for unruly horses, A 3282.
Trede-foul, *s.* treader of fowls, B 3135.
Trench, *s.* a hollow walk, alley, F 392.
Trentals, *s.* series of masses for the dead, D 1717.
Tresor, *s.* treasure, wealth; **Tresour**, B 3401.
Trespace, *v.* trespass, transgress, sin, B 3370.
Trete, *pr. pl.* discourse, treat, C 630.
Tretec, *s.* treaty, B 3865.
Tretis, *s.* treatise, document, B 2147.
Tretys, *adj.* long, well-proportioned, A 152.
Trewe, *pl. used as s.* the faithful, B 456.
Treweliche, *adv.* truly, E 804.
Trewe love, *s.* condiment to sweeten breath, A 3692.
Triacle, *s.* a sovereign remedy, B 479.
Trille, *v.* turn, F 316.
Trippe, *v.* to trip, to move briskly with the feet, F 312.
Troden, *fp.* stepped, C 712.
Trompe, *s.* trumpet, B 705.
Tronchoun, *s.* broken shaft of a spear, A 2615.
Trone, *s.* throne (of God), heaven, C 842.
Trouble, *adj.* troubled, gloomy, E 465.
Trouthe, *s.* truth, G 238; **troth**, truth, B 527.
Trufes, *s. pl.* trifles, I 715.
Tryce, *v.* pull away, B 3715.
Trye, *adj.* choice, excellent, B 2046.
Tryne compass, the threefold world, containing earth, sea, and heaven, G 45.
Tulle, *v.* lure, A 4134.
Twelf, twelve, E 736.
Tweyfold, *adj.* twofold, double, G 566.
Twinkling, *s.* momentary blinking, E 37.
Twinne, *ger.* to separate, B 517; to depart (from), C 430.
Twiste, *v.* to twist, wring, torment, F 566.
Twiste, *s. dat.* twig, spray, F 442.
Twyes, *adv.* twice, B 1738.
Tyde, *s.* season, F 142.
Tyden, *v.* befall, B 337.
Tyding, *s.* tidings, news, B 726.
Tyme, *s.* time, B 19.

U.

Unbokele, *v.* unbuckle, F 555.
Unbounden, *fp.* unbound, unwedded, divorced, E 1226.
Unbrent, *fp.* unburnt, B 1658.
Uncouple, *v.* to ~~lo~~ loose, B 3692.
Uncouth, *adj. pl.* strange, F 284.
Undergrowe, *fp.* undergrown, A 156.
Undermeles, *s. pl.* morning meal-time, D 875.
Undern, *s.* a particular period of the day, generally from 9 A.M. to midday; it here probably means the beginning of that period, or a little after 9 A.M., E 260, 981.
Undernom, *pt. s.* perceived, G 243.
Underpyghte, *pt. s.* stuffed, filled underneath, B 789.
Underspore, *v.* lever up, A 3465.
Understonde, *v.* to understand, E 20; **Understonde**, *pr. pl.* understand, C 646.
Undertake, *v.* to affirm, E 803; *1 pr. s.* I am bold to say, B 3516.
Undigne, *adj.* unworthy, E 359.
Unfestlich, *adj.* unfestive, jaded, F 366.
Unhele, *s.* misfortune, sickness, C 116.
Unkinde, *adj.* unnatural, B 88.
Unkindely, *adv.* unnaturally, C 485.
Unkindenesse, *s.* unkindness, B 1057.
Unnethe, *adv.* scarcely, hardly, with difficulty, B 1050, 1816.
Unsad, *adj.* unsettled, E 995.
Unset, *adj.* unappointed, A 1524.
Unslakked, *adj.* unslacked, G 806.
Unthriftily, *adv.* poorly, G 893.
Untrewe, *adj.* untrue, false, B 3218.
Untrouthe, *s.* untruth, B 687.
Unwar, *adj.* unexpected, B 427.
Unweldy, *adj.* unwieldy, difficult to move, H 55.
Unwemmed, *fp.* unspotted, spotless, G 137, 225.
Unyolden, without yielding, A 2642.
Up-haf, *pt. s.* uplifted, A 2428.
Upright, *adv.* flat on the back, A 4194.
Up-so-doun, *adv.* upside down, A 1377.
Upsterte, *pt. s.* upstarted, arose, A 1080.
Up-yaf, *pt. s.* yielded up, A 2427.

V.

Vane, *s.* weather-vane, E 996.
Variaunt, *adj.* varying, changing, changeable, fickle, G 1175.
Vavasour, *s.* landholder, A 360.
Veluettes, *pl.* velvets, F 644.
Venerye, *s.* hunting, A 166, 2308.
Venim, *s.* venom, poison, A 2751.
Ventusinge, *s.* cupping, A 2747.

Verdegrees, *s.* verdigris, G 791.
 Verdit, *s.* verdict, A 787.
 Vermyne, *s.* vermin, E 1095.
 Vernage, *s.* white wine, B 1261.
 Vernicle, *s.* copy of the handkerchief with the impression of the face of the Saviour, A 685.
 Verray, *adj.* very, true; *verray force*, main force, B 3237.
 Verrayment, *adv.* truly, B 1903.
 Vertu, *s.* virtue. F 593; *vertu plese*, satisfy virtue, be virtuous, E 216; magic power, magic influence, F 146, 157.
 Veye, guard (?), A 3485.
 Vese, *s.* a rush of wind, draught, gush, A 1085.
 Vessel, *s.* (collectively) vessels, plate, B 3338.
 Vestiment, *s.* clothing, robes, F 59.
 Veyn, *adj.* vain, empty, powerless, silly, G 497.
 Veyne-blood, *s.* blood of the veins, A 2747.
 Viage, *s.* journey, voyage, B 259.
 Vicary, *s.* victor, I 22.
 Vilanye, *s.* evil-doing, B 1681.
 Vileinye, *s.* discourtesy, C 740; licentiousness, G 231.
 Violes, *s.* *pl.* vials, phials, G 793.
 Viritrate, *s.* hag, D 1582.
 Vitaile, *s.* victuals, food; Vitaille, E 59, 265.
 Vitaile, *v.* provide with victuals; Vitailed, *pp.* provisioned, B 869.
 Vitremyte, *s.* woman's cap, B 3562.
 Voluper, *s.* cap, A 3241.
 Voyden, *v.* to get rid of, E 910; F 188; *imp. s.* depart from, E 806; Voydeth, *imp. pl.* send away, G 1136.
 Voys, *s.* voice, F 99; rumor, E 629.

W.

Waast, *s.* waist, B 1890.
 Wachet, *s.* blue cloth, A 3321.
 Wafereres, *s.* *pl.* makers of *gaufres* or wafer-cakes, confectioners, C 479.
 Waiteth, *pr. s.* watches, E 708.
 Waken, *v. act.* to awake, B 1187.
 Wakinge, *s.* a keeping awake, period of wakefulness. B 22.
 Wal, *s.* wall, E 1047.
 Wan, *pt. s.* won, B 3337.
 Wanges, *s.* *pl.* cheek-teeth, A 4030.
 Wang-tooth, *s.* molar tooth, B 3234.
 Wanhope, *s.* despair, A 1249.
 Wanie, *v.* wane A 2078.
 Wantown, *adj.* wanton, free, unrestrained, A 208; Wantoun, E 236.
 Wantownesse, *s.* wantonness, A 264.
 Wantrust, *adj.* distrustful, H 281
 War, *adj.* aware; *be war*, beware, take heed, B 119; *beth ware*, B 1629.

War, *imp. s.* as *pl.*; *war yow*, take care of yourselves, make way, B 1889.
 Wardecors, *s.* bodyguard, D 359.
 Warderere, look out behind, A 4101.
 Wardrobe, *s.* privy, B 1762.
 Ware, *adj.* aware. See War.
 Ware, *imp.* beware, B 4146.
 Ware, *s.* merchandise, B 140.
 Warente, *v.* to warrant, protect, C 338.
 Warriages, *s.* *pl.* butcher birds, D 1408.
 Warie, 1 *pr. s.* I curse, B 372.
 Warisshe, *v.* recover, B 2172.
 Warissinge, *s.* healing, B 2205.
 Warne, 1 *pr. s.* I warn, I bid you take heed, B 16, 1184. See Werne.
 Warnestore, *ger.* to garrison, B 2521.
 Waryce, *v.* heal, cure, C 906.
 Wasshe, *pp.* washed, C 353.
 Wast, *s.* waste, B 1609.
 Wastel-breed, *s.* cake of fine flour, A 147.
 Wawe, *s.* wave, B 508; Wawes, *pl.* B 468.
 Wayk, *adj.* weak, B 1671.
 Wayten, *v.* to watch, F 444; Wayteth, *pr. s.* B 3331.
 Webbe, *s.* weaver, A 362.
 Wedde, *s. dat.* pledge, A 1218.
 Wede, *s.* a "weed," a garment, A 1006; B 2107.
 Weder, *s.* weather, F 52.
 Weel. See Wel.
 Weet, *s.* wet, B 3407.
 Weex, *pt. s.* waxed, grew, G 513.
 Wel, *adv.* well, B 25; very, as in *wel royal*, very royal, F 26; about (used with numbers), F 382; certainly, by all means, E 635.
 Welde, *s.* rule, D 271.
 Welde, *v.* wield; *pt. s.* wielded, overpowered, B 3452.
 Wele, *s.* prosperity, B 175.
 Welful, *adj.* full of weal, blessed, B 451.
 Wel-faring, *adj.* well-faring, thriving, prosperous, B 3132.
 Welked, *pp.* withered, C 738.
 Welte, *pt. s.* wielded, *i.e.* lorded it over, possessed for use, B 3200.
 Wem, *s.* injury, hurt, F 121.
 Wemmelees, *adj.* stainless, G 47.
 Wende, *v.* go; Wente him, *pt. s.* turned himself, *i.e.* went his way, G 1110; Went, *pp.* gone; *ben went*, are gone, B 173; *is went*, is gone, G 534.
 Weneth, *pr. s.* imagines, C 569.
 Wente. See Wende.
 Wepen, *pr. pl.* weep, B 820; Wepte, *pt. s.* wept, B 267.
 Werche, *v.* to work, make, do, perform, B 566; G 14.
 Wered, *pp.* worn, B 3315.
 Werk, *s.* work, *i.e.* reality, practice, F 482.

Werking, *s.* work, mode of operation, G 1367.
Werreyed, *pt. s.* made war upon, warred against, F 10.
Werte, *s.* wart, A 555.
Wery, *adj.* weary, B 2111.
Wesh, *pt. s.* washed, B 3934. See **Wasshe**.
West, *s. as adv.* in the west, F 459.
Wete, *s.* wet, perspiration, G 1187.
Wex, *s.* wax, G 1164, 1268.
Wey, *s.* way: *a furlong wey*, a small distance, a short time, E 516; *Weye, dat.* on (his) way, F 604.
Weyve, *v.* forsake, G 276.
Whete, *s.* wheat, I 36.
Whyl-er, *adv.* formerly, G 1328.
Widwe, *s.* widow, C 450.
Wight, *s.* man, creature, person, B 656.
Wike, *s.* week, C 362.
Wiltow, *for* Wilt thou, *i.e.* wishest thou, B 2116.
Windas, *s.* windlass, F 184.
Winsinge, *adj.* lively, A 3263.
Wlatsom, *adj.* loathsome, B 4243.
Wol, *pr. s.* permits, H 28; *wol adoun*, is about to set, I 72; *Wole, pr. pl.* will, B 468; *Wol-tow*, wilt thou, G 307.
Wombe, *s.* the belly, C 522.
Wommanhede, *s.* womanhood, B 851.
Wonger, *s.* pillow, B 2102.
Woodeth *pr. s.* plays the madman, acts madly, G 467.
Woodnesse, *s.* madness, C 496.
Wopen, *pp.* wept, F 523.
Wort, *s.* unfermented beer, wort, G 813.
Wortes, *s. pl.* roots, vegetables, E 226.
Worth; *worth upon*, gets upon, B 1941.
Wrak, *s.* wreck, B 513.
Wraw, *adj.* savage, fierce, angry, H 46.
Wreek, *imp. s.* wreak, avenge, B 3095.
Wrenches, *s. pl.* frauds, stratagems, tricks, G 1081.
Wroteth, *pr. s.* digs with the snout, I 157.
Wyflees, *adj.* wifeless, E 1236.
Wyfly, *adj.* wifelike, E 429.

Y.

Y-, prefix to past participles. See below.
Y-blessed, *pp.* blessed, H 99.
Y-bleynt, *pp.* blenched, started aside, A 3753.
Y-boren, *pp.* born, C 704.
Y-chaped, having *chapes* or caps of metal at the end of a sheath, A 366.
Y-clad, *pp.* clothed, G 133.

Y-cleped, *pp.* called, H 2; *Y-clept*, G 772.
Y-corven, *pp.* cut, G 533.
Y-coupled, *pp.* coupled, wedded, E 1219.
Y-coyned, *pp.* coined, C 770.
Y-cristned, *pp.* baptized, B 240.
Ydel, *adj.* idle, E 217.
Ydolastre, *s.* an idolater, B 3377.
Yeddinges, *pl.* songs, A 237.
Yede, *pt. s.* went, G 1141.
Yelden, *v.* to yield, E 843.
Yeldhalle, *s.* guild-hall, A 370.
Yelding, *s.* produce, yielding, A 596.
Yelleden, *pt. pl.* yelled, B 4579.
Yelpe, *v.* boast, A 2238.
Yeman, *s.* yeoman, A 101.
Yexeth, *pr. s.* hiccoughs, A 4151.
Y-fet, *pp.* fetched, G 1116.
Y-fetered, *pp.* fettered, A 1229.
Y-glewed, *pp.* glued, fixed tight, F 182.
Y-glosed, *pp.* flattered, H 34.
Y-hent, *pp.* seized, caught, C 868.
Y-herd, *pp.* haired, A 3738.
Y-holde, *pp.* considered, C 602.
Yilden. See **Yelden**.
Y korven, *pp.* cut, B 1801.
Y-lad, *pp.* carried (in a cart), A 530.
Y-maad, *pp.* made, caused, F 218.
Y-mette, *pp.* met, B 1115.
Y-meynd, *pp.* mingled, mixed, A 2170.
Y-now, *adv.* enough, G 864.
Yolden, *pp.* yielded, A 3052.
Yolle, *pr. pl.* yell, A 2672.
Youling, *s.* yelling, A 1278.
Y-piked, *pp.* picked over, G 941.
Ypocras, Hippocrates; *hence*, a kind of cordial, C 306.
Y prayed, *pp.* bidden, invited, E 269.
Y-preved, *pp.* proved to be, A 485.
Y-reke, *pp.* spread about, A 3882.
Yren, *adj.* iron, G 759.
Yren, *s.* iron, G 827.
Y-rent, *pp.* rent, torn, B 844.
Y-schette, *pp.* shut, B 560.
Y-set, *pp.* set down, F 173.
Y-seyled, *pp.* sailed, B 4289.
Y-shapen, *pp.* shaped, contrived, G 1080.
Y-slawe, *pp.* slain, B 484.
Y-sprad, *pp.* spread, B 1644.
Y-spreyned, *pp.* sprinkled, A 2169.
Y-stiked, *pp.* stabbed, F 1476.
Y-stonge, *pp.* stung, C 355.
Y-storve, *pp.* dead, A 2014.
Y-sweped, *pp.* swept, G 938.
Yvel, *adv.* ill, E 460.

LRBAp 16

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Feb. 2009

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